

# Elementary English

*A Magazine of the Language Arts*

MAY, 1958

READING



WRITING



SPEAKING



LISTENING



SPELLING



ENGLISH USAGE



CHILDREN'S BOOKS



RADIO AND  
TELEVISION



AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS



POETRY



CREATIVE  
WRITING

*Robert McCloskey*



*Centerburg Tales* by Robert McCloskey

*Organ of the National Council  
of Teachers of English*

# Elementary ENGLISH

An official organ of the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

MAY, 1958

286	By Way of Introduction
287	Robert McCloskey, Student of Human Nature
297	MARGUERITE P. ARCHER Reading Disability and The Role of the Teacher
299	JEANNE S. CHALL Fun With Poetry
302	LUCY DE BASE An Approach to Individualized Reading
305	ADELAIDE PICOZZI Business Letters That Should Be Written
307	INEZ MARIE WARE The School Library, 1958 . . . . .
309	ROSE H. AGREE The Process of Oral Reporting
314	LOIS V. JOHNSON Into the World of Books
317	TILLIE HOROWITZ Reading at The School Camp
322	O. L. DAVIS, JR. The Gifted Child
324	MARIAN HUFFMAN First-Grade Achievement—Plans of Grouping
327	NEVILLE BREMER A Communication
329	DON A. KEISTER Councilletter
331	LUELLA B. COOK Pioneers in Reading VII: Nila Banton Smith
333	H. ALAN ROBINSON Idea Inventory
335	LOUISE HOVDE MORTENSEN Windows on the World
339	IRIS VINTON Edited by LOUISE HOVDE MORTENSEN The Educational Scene
345	WILLIAM A. JENKINS Books for Children
	Edited by MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT AND MARGARET MARY CLARK

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### NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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*By Way of Introduction . . .*

With this issue, MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT relinquishes her duties as editor of the Books for Children department. The National Council of Teachers of English and the editor of *Elementary English* are deeply in her debt for her faithful and distinguished services, performed without financial compensation since she took over in January, 1953. The many readers who have followed her commentaries on children's books through these years can understand why she is held in such high esteem and affection by children's authors, publisher's editors of children's books, librarians, and teachers throughout the land. We know we can count on her continued counsel in the future. Mrs. Arbuthnot applauds our success in securing the services of MABEL F. ALSTETTER as her successor. Mrs. Alstetter is editor of the Council's excellent elementary reading list, *Adventuring with Books*.



ROBERT McCLOSKEY won the 1958 Caldecott Award as an illustrator of books for children (for *Time of Wonder*), and established a record by winning this award twice (in 1941 for *Make Way for Ducklings*). When Mrs. MARGUERITE P. ARCHER selected McCloskey as the subject of her article, she did not know that he would be thus honored. Her choice is evidence of her excellent judgment about children's literature.



JEANNE CHALL is known as an expert on the subject of the readability of printed materials. In this article she shows that her interests extend to the whole field of reading instruction. Her recent monograph, *Readability; Its Research and Applications*, was published by Ohio State University Press.



Miss LUCY DEBASE, who writes on "Fun with Poetry," has studied art at the Chicago Art Institute and the Colorado Springs School of Fine Arts.

ADELAIDE PICOZZI, in addition to her duties as an elementary school teacher, serves as Assistant Professor of Mathematics for the New Jersey State Teachers College at Union.



INEZ WARE, who contributed the article, "To Teacher with Love," some time ago, wrote her article on business letters on the basis of experiences in the Oswego State College Campus School.



The article about modern school libraries, by ROSE H. AGREE, was originally written as a paper in Mrs. Rachael W. De Angelo's class in Library Science at Queens College.



The ability to make a good oral report is a valuable goal for all pupils, and one not too often achieved. LOIS V. JOHNSON suggests a helpful checklist that teachers may use.



TILLIE HOROWITZ is a valued contributor to this magazine. Her work has also been published in the *Instructor* and *Grade Teacher*.



Summer camps beckon these days for many fortunate boys and girls. The experience will be enriched if the camp program includes reading. O. L. DAVIS, JR., a Korean war veteran, contributor to numerous educational magazines, and author of volumes of verse and fiction, describes a diversified program for reading in camp.



After reading MARIAN HUFFMAN'S verse on the gifted child, we believe Ogden Nash had better look to his laurels.



The article by DR. NEVILLE BREMER on grouping is based on his dissertation, *A Comparative Study of Children's Achievement in Reading in Grade 1 under Certain Selected Conditions in the Amarillo, Texas, Public Schools*.

# ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

XXXV

MAY, 1958

No. 5

MARGUERITE P. ARCHER

## Robert McCloskey, Student of Human Nature

How often a well-intentioned parent has said, "I want my child to read the classics!" This opening remark is sometimes followed by a plea to the librarian or teacher being addressed for co-operation in a plot to inveigle Junior into reading *Tom Sawyer* (which the parent is *sure* she read at his age). Fond memories of Tom's cleverness in getting other boys to whitewash his fence seem to overshadow the realities of Junior's reading situation. If the parent is experiencing difficulty in getting Junior to read *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, it's a pretty safe bet that Junior just isn't ready to read it yet.

Perhaps the size of the book overwhelms him. If the book isn't too fat, then he may shy away from the small print. Maybe some of the words look too big or there aren't very many pictures. Or the label of "classic" may have scared him off. Whatever the reason may be, Junior will seldom turn out to be a child who *should* be reading the book right now. In two or three years he might enjoy it very much, but right now he would far rather

read something else.

For parents whose youngsters are balking at *Tom Sawyer*, the teacher or librarian must find her own answers. But for Junior himself there may be some very happy choices suitable to his present interests and abilities. Has Junior met Henry Huggins and Homer Price? If his reading level is third grade or better, he'd probably have a lot of fun with Henry. If he reads the first two pages of *Homer Price* with interest, his mother probably won't be able to pry it loose from him at bedtime.

After fifteen years of almost undiminished popularity, *Homer Price* is becoming a classic hero to American children. In another ten years parents may be complaining to teachers, "I can't see why Junior doesn't want to read *Homer Price*. I'm *sure* I read it when I was his age."

### *Three Modern Heroes of Middle-aged Children*

Homer Price, Henry Huggins, and

Mrs. Archer is Reading Consultant in the Prospect Hill School, Pelham, New York.



Marguerite P. Archer

Herbert Yadon are winning popularity contests all over the United States.<sup>1</sup> Henry and Homer (or Homer and Henry) usually win, and Herbert comes in second. Who runs the contests? Librarians throughout the country. Who votes in the contests? Children from nine to eleven. What are the contest rules? There aren't any, for these contests are most informal and usually unannounced. The "contests" consist simply of circulation of books about boys to children aged nine to eleven. In small libraries it is a wonder that the children don't get discouraged over asking for *Homer Price* or for "a Henry book." "They're always out!"

#### *Why Are Books About These Boys So Popular?*

The best way to find out is to read them. When you find yourself chuckling and then laughing out loud, you'll know why they are such favorites. Adults may call them "humorous," "hilarious," "uproariously amusing," but to children they



*Centerville Tales*

<sup>1</sup>*Homer Price* by Robert McCloskey won the Young Readers' Choice Award in 1947, and *Henry and Ribsy* by Beverly Cleary won the same award in 1957. Herbert is the hero of three books by Hazel Wilson: *Herbert*, *Herbert Again*, and *More Fun with Herbert*, all published by Alfred Knopf.

are just plain "funny." To intermediate-grade children humor seems to be the strongest recommendation for a book. It is a rare child who does not enjoy a funny story. Yes, there are other strong recommendations for books such as "plenty of action," "exciting mystery," and "It really happened"; but humor seems to have the most general appeal to middle-grade children.

Should parents and teachers be alarmed over this situation? Definitely not. Instead, they should be thankful that their children enjoy reading. A Gallup poll of 1955 showed that "during the previous year 61 per cent of adult Americans hadn't read one book, except the Bible. It showed another shocker—half the adults in the United States live within a mile of a public library, but only a fifth of them ever manage to get themselves inside the front door."<sup>2</sup> If we wish to prevent a duplication of these appalling statistics in 1980, parents, teachers, and librarians will have to co-operate in providing today's elementary school youngsters with material that they enjoy reading so that as adults they will independently choose to read—even when they don't "have to."

Public librarians usually do not meet reluctant readers, but school librarians and teachers meet them daily. In almost every class there will be some children who do not *want* to read; far too often these children are capable of reading, but they just *don't* want to. They would rather do almost anything else. Last year one fourth-grade boy completed a sentence beginning "I would rather read than—" with

<sup>2</sup>Emilie Tavel, "Laughter, Learning, Other Intangibles . . .," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 8, 1958, p. 9.

the word "die." The child was emotionally disturbed for a number of reasons, but his extreme case reveals an attitude towards reading which is, unfortunately, that of many children—though usually less severe.

*Homer, Henry, and Herbert Are a Boon to Adults Concerned Over Reluctant Readers.*

For a reluctant reader himself, they are sometimes a revelation. What a joy it is to discover that reading can be fun! Once a child makes this discovery, interested adults can help him to capitalize on it so that eventually he becomes a habitual reader. Since each child has interests besides humor, the humorous books can be used as bait. They can be used as starting points for the development of wide reading.

Many librarians have led youngsters out of a Nancy Drew or Hardy boys "rut" by giving them easily read but better written mysteries. In a similar manner the child who loves the "crazy" stories Grandpa Hercules tells in *Centerburg Tales* can often be led to enjoyment of some of the classic tall tales about Paul Bunyan and other folk heroes or even to children's versions of "The Ilaid" and "The Odyssey." A little time spent with a child in discussing a book he likes can provide helpful clues to what he might also like to read. One reason for this is that "funny" books often have many other values besides humor.

*Now Take McCloskey*

For example, the Homer Price books by Robert McCloskey are notable for their excellent illustrations. In an autobiographical sketch<sup>1</sup> McCloskey wrote with tongue

in cheek, "It is just sort of an accident that I write books. I really think up stories in pictures and just fill in between the pictures with a sentence or a paragraph or a few pages of words." Though the statement is an oversimplification when one considers the amount of work that obviously is expended on all of the McCloskey books, there is, indeed, more truth than fiction to this explanation of his method.

*McCloskey the Artist*

By examining McCloskey's picture-story books, one can readily see that the author-artist has done as he says and done it with pre-eminent success. *Make Way for Ducklings* received the Caldecott Medal for 1941. In a 1948 review Anne Carroll Moore stated, "If the Caldecott Award had not already been given to *Make Way for Ducklings*, it should go to *Blueberries for Sal*. As it stands, the book emphasizes our debt to an artist who has met this difficult era with complete integrity."<sup>2</sup> "Beauty, truth, and the sure line of an artist who has thoroughly mastered his technique set this book apart . . ."<sup>3</sup> Four years later McCloskey's *One Morning in Maine* appeared as a delightful sequel to *Blueberries for Sal*. *The Library Journal* recommended it highly: "Perfect description of a happy American family against the background of the Maine coast. Double-spread pictures in soft blue and white, full of details for

<sup>1</sup>Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft, editors, *The Junior Book of Authors* (Second Edition Revised), The H. W. Wilson Co., New York, 1951, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup>Anne Carroll Moore, "The Three Owls' Notebook," *The Horn Book*, Vol. 24, No. 6, November, 1948, p. 434.

<sup>3</sup>In loc. cit.

little people to enjoy are truly charming."<sup>1</sup> In this book Sal is now seven and little Jane has been added to the family. There are several self-portraits of father McCloskey as well as sketches of mother.<sup>2</sup>

Last year *Time of Wonder* appeared.



*Homer Price*

"For the first time Robert McCloskey has done a picture book in color—in lovely soft full-page water colors that tell of a family's summer on an island off the Maine coast."<sup>3</sup> "The author has succeeded in transferring his love for the island to the printing page, and as you listen to his words and look at his pictures, you feel that every day and every season is a 'time of wonder.' This is entirely different from any book he has done before, and he has made it a thing of great beauty."<sup>4</sup> *Time of Wonder* has broken a precedent as Robert

<sup>1</sup>Alice W. Wetherell's review in *Library Journal Recommended Children's Books of 1952*, compiled by Louise Davis, American Library Association, Chicago, 1953, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Mrs. McCloskey is Margaret, daughter of Ruth Sawyer.

<sup>3</sup>F. L. S. in "Books for Young People," *The Saturday Review of Literature*, Vol. 40, No. 51 (December 21, 1957), p. 38.

<sup>4</sup>Quoted from a review by Jennie D. Linquist (*The Horn Book* for December, 1957, p. 480) by *Book Review Digest*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (March, 1958), p. 37.

McCloskey of Brewster, N. Y., will be the first person who ever received the Caldecott Medal twice when the annual A. L. A. meeting is held next July in San Francisco.

Robert McCloskey is an artist. From high school he went to an art school in Boston on a scholarship. He then attended the National Academy of Design in New York and painted on Cape Cod. In 1938 he won the Prix de Rome, which he used for a year of painting in Italy ten years later. During World War II he became a sergeant and drew training pictures for the army.

#### *McCloskey the Observer*

In addition to being an artist, McCloskey is a keen observer of human nature and of community life. While his picture-story books are based on the family life of father McCloskey, three other books of his are based on his own boyhood in



*Lentil*

Hamilton, Ohio, where he was born in 1914. From juvenile experiences, both personal and vicarious, he must have derived the wonderful flavor of *Lentil*, *Homer Price*, and *Centerburg Tales*.

#### *McCloskey the Musician*

"When I was young, I surrounded myself with musical instruments and tried the musician's life."<sup>1</sup> "I attended public school, and from the time my fingers were long enough to play the scale I took piano lessons. I started next to play the harmonica, the drums, and then the oboe."<sup>2</sup> In *Lentil* we sense a small town band's importance to the community. Lentil himself is a boy preoccupied with learning to play the harmonica. The eight-year-old identifying himself with Lentil experiences a musical success story. Lentil is a boy who can neither sing nor whistle, but it is he who saves the day when the village band is unable to play a welcome for the homecoming of the town's first citizen. Lentil seems quite real to the child reader. One fifth-grade girl said to me, "I read it in the third grade. Do you know what he did? He played his harmonica in the bathtub!"

Both Lentil and the town of Alto, Ohio (circa 1912) seem completely authentic. Every detail counts as the boy, the town and its people are so masterfully caricatured. *Lentil* is a picture-story book consisting mainly of wonderfully humorous charcoal drawings. Published in 1940, *Lentil* was a forerunner of *Homer Price* (1943) and of *Centerburg Tales* (1951).<sup>3</sup> *Lentil* can well serve to introduce the young reader to the more maturely humorous side of Robert McCloskey. Having enjoyed *Lentil* in about the third grade, he is receptive to Homer

in fourth or fifth grade. A few youngsters read about Homer in fourth grade; the majority of his fans are fifth-graders, and many youngsters "discover" him in sixth grade or later.

#### *Who is this Homer Price, Anyway?*

After seeing him cheerfully posing his head on top of a bust of the Greek poet Homer, the reader observes our hero strolling along on the title page and then whistling his way home from school as the first story of *Homer Price* begins. "The Case of the Sensational Scent." What scent? How could a smell be sensational?

With his curiosity thoroughly aroused, the reader first concludes that Homer is just an ordinary American boy.

"About two miles outside of Centerburg where route 56 meets 56A there lives a boy named Homer. Homer's father owns a tourist camp . . . Homer does odd jobs about the place . . .

"When Homer isn't going to school, or doing odd jobs, or playing with other boys, he works on his hobby which is building radios. He has a workshop in one corner of his room where he works in the evenings.

"Before going to bed at night he usually goes down to the kitchen to have a glass of milk and cookies because working on radios makes him hungry. Tabby,

<sup>1</sup>Kunitz and Haycraft, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup>In loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>We are indebted to The Viking Press of 625 Madison Avenue, New York, for publishing all of McCloskey's books, including four which he illustrated: *The Man Who Lost His Head* by Claire Hachet Bishop (1942); *Trigger John's Son* by Tom Robinson (1949); *Journey Cake, Ho!* by Ruth Sawyer (1953); and *Junket* by Anne Hitchcock White (1955).

the family cat, usually comes around for something to eat too."<sup>1</sup>

Then as Homer is getting his nightly snack, the reader soon realizes that extraordinary things happen to this boy. From the moment that Homer discovers a skunk is drinking the saucer of milk intended for Tabby, the reader knows that there will be lots of excitement. And there certainly is! One thing leads to another until Homer and his skunk, Aroma, catch some robbers.

*Homer Price* consists of six incidents in the adventurous life of the hero. The universal favorite among his adventures concerns "The Doughnuts." When his Uncle Ulysses' doughnut machine just won't stop making doughnuts, the situation gets worse and worse until Homer finally thinks of a plan to sell most of them. Meanwhile the reader has had a wonderful time. Even though *Homer Price* is a collection of illustrated stories, each one follows the declared McCloskey pattern of a story in pictures filled in with a few pages of words. The reader sees the action of the stories in one hilarious picture after another in his own mind as events go rollicking along. There is nothing vague about either Homer or the incidents in which he becomes involved. Both text and pictures stress the main action, delineate the characters, and round out the tales with effective and humorous detail. The stories in *Homer Price* are obviously fictional, but the enthralled reader has a feeling that they could be true (maybe).

#### *McCloskey Student of Human Nature*

Little mention is made of Homer's

<sup>1</sup>Robert McCloskey, *Homer Price*, The Viking Press, New York, 1949, p. 10.

parents, but a number of characters besides Homer are well-drawn (both in pictures and text). The reader becomes well acquainted with the people that interest Homer—his uncle Ulysses, who runs a lunch room over in Centerburg and loves labor-saving devices; the town sheriff, who spends his time playing checkers and talking in a mixed-up way delightful to children; string-saving Uncle Telly; a sandwich man passing through town; the be-whiskered stranger who turns out to be a modern Pied Piper (thwarted by Homer's precautions); and the self-centered thorn in the town's side, Dulcy Dooner. A child can learn a lot about human nature while reading *Homer Price*. He can also gain some perspective on small-town life through appreciation of McCloskey's satire. A community project has never been more thoroughly lampooned than has Centerburg's Pageant for "One Hundred and Fifty Years of Centerburg Progress Week."

#### *McCloskey the Inventor*

Like McCloskey's boyhood interest in music, his juvenile ambition to be an inventor is also evident in *Homer Price*. Homer, too, is fascinated by machinery, and this fascination strikes a responsive chord in many young readers. Like many boys Homer is always "making something." In addition, some of the action centers around machines. These range from Homer's private elevator for Aroma to the bearded stranger's pickup-truck-sized musical mousetrap (that won't hurt the mice). The dilemma of modern man overwhelmed by the results of mechanization is depicted in "Wheels of Progress" in which the mass erection of one hundred identically and completely prefabricated

houses leaves the tenants frantically bewildered.

#### *Eversomuch More-So Centerburg*

*Centerburg Tales* continues the saga of *Homer Price*, but the element of fantasy is much more marked. Although all of the tales in *Homer Price* (except for the one about the modern Pied Piper) might possibly have happened, the stories in *Centerburg Tales* simply could not be true. The fact that they are too tall to be true does not spoil the fun.

Half of the book revolves around Homer's Grandpa Hercules, a yarn-spinner beloved by all the children of Centerburg. In his stories the old man has Herculean strength and he makes himself the subject of many legends. Occasionally the men in Uncle Ulysses' lunch room doubt Grampa's veracity.

"Hold on, Hercules!" shouted the sheriff, over the laughing of the girls and boys. "You're changing the ending!"

"Yeah," said Uncle Ulysses, "that's not the way you told it when I was a boy."

"O' course not," Grampa Hercules defended himself. "That story keeps getting older and changing every year, just like people. The trouble with you fellas is not enough exercise. You're getting older and losing your sense of humor, and this story keeps getting older and better."<sup>1</sup>

When Grampa Herc is put "on the spot" by the men, it is Homer and his contemporaries who help him save face. They know how far the old man stretches the truth, but they certainly don't want him to stop doing it.

"All who have enjoyed *Homer Price* will delight in the further adventures of

Homer, his Centerburg neighbors, and the indomitable Gramp, whose powers of invention are second to none. In these refreshingly different tall tales there is a good deal of warm-hearted entertainment which is almost unrivaled in its spontaneity, feeling for real personalities, and colorful and amusing situations. The lively and amusing illustrations by the author complement the text. Recommended. Ages 9-14."<sup>2</sup>

"The incident of the Gravity-Bitties and the strange affair in the public library when the juke-box sets some of the prominent citizens of Centerburg to dancing are as hilarious as the doughnut machine in Homer's first book. The drawings are just as funny and just as dramatic and there are a generous number of them."<sup>3</sup>

In "Experiment 13" of *Centerburg Tales* the town's most unco-operative citizen, Dulcy Dooner, involves the entire population in a desperate situation, but Homer resolves the crisis with the aid of the doughnut machine. In "Eversomuch More-So" a fast-talking salesman takes advantage of the lunch room regulars by selling them some empty cans of the marvelous invisible product, Eversomuch More-So. When Homer has almost convinced them of their gullibility, Grampa Hercules comes to their rescue. In the last tale Homer saves the day by resorting to the public library as he did once before in the previous book. His pal Freddy is much more prominent in *Centerburg Tales* than

<sup>1</sup>Helen M. Brogan's review in *Library Journal Recommended Children's Book of 1951*, compiled by Louise Davis, American Library Association, Chicago, 1952, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>Excerpt from review in *The Saturday Review of Literature* of June 9, 1951.

<sup>1</sup>Robert McCloskey, *Centerburg Tales*, The Viking Press, New York, 1951, pp. 28-29.

in *Homer Price*, but it is always Homer's own resourcefulness that saves the day.

#### *You Figure It Out!*

One of the unusual characteristics of Robert McCloskey as a children's author is that he does not "tell it all." Sometimes he hints and lets the reader guess what happened, especially in "Mystery Yarn." This story concerns a contest between Homer's Uncle Telemachus and the sheriff for the hand of Miss Terwilliger, the town's knitting teacher, who has kept both of them spellbound for years with her delicious dinners. Miss T. enters the contest herself and—by subterfuge—manages to win; then she chooses Telly for her husband. The story may have been at least partially inspired by the Greek legend that Telemachus eventually wed the sorceress Circe, who worked at a loom and bewitched her male guests with drugged food and drink.

#### *Watch Those Pictures!*

Another interesting feature which some children would note involves the illustrations. In "The Case of the Sensational Scent" the story concerns four robbers, but five are pictured in one bed.<sup>1</sup> Here is an instance in which the author-illustrator is having his little joke with the serious-minded reader. In another story, when Grampa Hercules has lined up a flock of children at Uncle Ulysses' lunch counter to eat doughnuts and hear a yarn, little Sal is pictured (on the extreme left next to Homer) reaching for her doughnut.<sup>2</sup> Later there are rear views of Sal. Such touches as these are likely to puzzle and then please observant children.

<sup>1</sup>*Homer Price*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>*Homer Price*, p. 55.

#### *That Worried Look*

The frontispiece of *Centerburg Tales* features busts of the Greek Homer and of Mark Twain which are being mimicked by Homer Price and Freddy. The bust of Homer seems blind to the boys' activity. This indifference is doubly appropriate as the ancient Greek storyteller was in no position to object to anyone's aping of the tall tale aspects of Homeric legends. Twain, however, was very much interested in boys, and his bust seems to be eyeing the two youngsters with a slightly worried look of interest.

Aside from the fact that the last of the Centerburg tales is connected with a yarn of Twain's, there are some other relationships between Mark Twain's work and Robert McCloskey's. The exploit of Hopper McThud, Grampa Hercules' partner in "Looking for Gold," reminds the reader of "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." It is not heresy to note that these two tales are very similar in character. Surely Twain would have been amused at this adaptation of his idea since he himself wrote a "Private History of the 'Jumping Frog' Story" in which he compares it to an old Greek tale of "The Athenian and the Frog." It might be highly interesting for some high school students to read McCloskey's story before reading Twain's. Difficult to read,<sup>3</sup> Twain's story might become much more comprehensible after preliminary reading of "Looking for Gold."

#### *Next Stop—Hannibal, Missouri*

Similarly, the children who enjoy read-

<sup>3</sup>Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft, editors, *American Authors, 1600-1900, A Biographical Dictionary*, The H. W. Wilson Co., New York, 1938, p. 160.

ing about Henry Huggins and Homer Price in the intermediate grades would have a good background for appreciating *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in eighth or ninth grade. Too often parents wish to force the classics on children who are not ready for them. This is a procedure which will almost certainly result in children's detesting the classics. Like *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, for example, is best appreciated by a mature reader.

If a superficial reaction to literature is desired, then by all means let's make youngsters read what they cannot fully comprehend. Comic books, television shows, and abridged, simplified (and spoiled) versions of various classics are all too often readily available to assist us in helping children to develop a superficial approach to literature.

A "TV and Radio" commentator in *The Saturday Review* last winter made some highly appropriate comments regarding this problem. "The Theatre Guild, a distinguished tradition of the American stage, undistinguished itself on television recently with a 'musical version' (over CBS-TV for U. S. Steel) of Mark Twain's novel, 'Huckleberry Finn.' By coincidence, I am sure, the same day WCBS-TV, the network's New York outlet, offered locally the first of a series of three lectures on the Mississippi River classic in its 'Sunrise Semester' comparative literature course, conducted by Dr. Floyd Zulli, Jr., of New York University. It was an unfortunate coincidence for the Theatre Guild.

"'Huckleberry Finn,' Dr. Zulli told us, was actually the author's spiritual autobiography, revealing Twain's horror of 'civilisation' with its violence, greed, hypoc-

risy, and 'Human beings can be awful cruel to one another.' The NYU teacher went on to note that the book contained 'one of the greatest studies of brotherly love ever written' in the relationship of Huck and Jim, the runaway slave."<sup>1</sup> "Dr. Zulli . . . eloquently sampled Twain's satiric thrusts and his poetic descriptions of the many moods of the mighty Mississippi. This was the classic Twain—doomed, like Dickens, to become a Christmas card author of cheery adolescence and teenage pranksterism."<sup>2</sup>

Besides being too profound for most children to appreciate at an early age, many of the classics are too difficult for children to read at all. In a prefatory note to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* Twain discusses the fact that a number of dialects are used—actually three plus four modified varieties. Reading dialect is no cinch!

Anyone who frets over the fact that most intermediate grade children today prefer reading McCloskey, for example, to Twain, should give some thought to the history of criticism of Mark Twain's works.

"Considerably more amusing than anything the humorist ever wrote was the fact that the trustees of some village libraries in New England solemnly voted that *Huckleberry Finn*, whose power of moral uplift has hardly been surpassed by any book of our time, was too demoralizing to be allowed on their shelves."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Which Twin Had the Twain," *The Saturday Review of Literature*, Vol. 40, No. 51 (December 21, 1957), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>In loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Samuel E. Moffett, "Mark Twain. A Biographical Sketch," *The Complete Works of Mark Twain*, American Artists Edition, Vol. 16, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1925, p. 395.

*Travels in History*, selected from the works of Mark Twain by C. N. Kendall, was published by Harper's in 1910. *Book Review Digest* described the volume as "Scenes selected from 'Joan of Arc,' 'The prince and the pauper' and other writings of Mark Twain for the purposes of home and supplementary reading in elementary schools."<sup>1</sup> Someone commented as follows in *The Nation* regarding this book: "We are not at all sure that Mark Twain should be introduced into any course of school reading but for voluntary pleasure he is excellent, even when he writes history."<sup>2</sup>

Twain's own preface to *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* concluded with this statement: "Although my book is intended mainly for the entertainment of boys and



Robert McCloskey and daughters Sally and Jane

girls, I hope it will not be shunned by men and women on that account, for part of my plan has been to try to pleasantly remind adults of what they once were themselves, and of how they felt and thought and talked, and what queer enterprises they sometimes engaged in."

Today *Tom Sawyer* is sometimes assigned reading in eighth or ninth grades, and it is frequently on supplementary reading lists for junior high school pupils. A few children may want to read it in the intermediate grades, but others should not be bribed or pressured into reading it before they are ready. When they are ready, let's lead them to it!

Instead of stressing a book, persons interested in helping a child to develop a lifelong enjoyment of reading should be approaching the matter from the child's standpoint and making books available to him which suit his present interests and abilities. Phyllis Fenner in *The Proof of the Pudding*<sup>3</sup> has provided an invaluable reference on what children really like to read. There is no longer any adequate excuse for failure in helping children to find what they would enjoy reading if library service is available. Robert McCloskey and many other fine writers have created books to delight children. Let's gradually introduce elementary youngsters to *Lentil*, Carolyn Haywood's Eddie, Beverly Cleary's Henry Huggins and, by all means, Centerburg's Homer Price.

<sup>1</sup>Descriptive notes by Justina Leavitt Wilson, *Book Review Digest*, The H. W. Wilson Co., Minneapolis, 1911, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Excerpt from a review in *The Nation* of September 15, 1910, p. 246.

<sup>3</sup>Published by The John Day Co., New York, 1957.

How important the matter of punctuation has now become! No literate person today would spell the Bomb without an initial capital letter.

## Reading Disability and The Role of the Teacher

Through the years there has been a growing recognition of the fact that learning difficulties, especially reading difficulties, are not a simple matter. Extensive clinical diagnoses of reading disability cases have again and again shown the pervasiveness of psychological problems among poor readers. In fact, emotional factors are so prevalent that it is rare to find a child without such problems among those treated in reading clinics.

What may we infer from this? Only that some relationship between emotional adjustment and reading exists. The nature of the relationship, however, is not always clear. Emotional difficulties may develop first and interfere with the child's learning. The reading problem may develop first, and bring out emotional reactions which further inhibit learning. Or it may be that emotional problems exist side by side with the reading difficulty. They may both stem from a common cause, or from different causes. *In short, the presence of an emotional problem in reading disability cases does not imply a necessary causal connection.* For individual cases, it is usually difficult and time-consuming to disentangle the causal relationship.

Because of the complexity of the problem, teachers have begun to question their role. Should they teach the child to read, or should they get at the basic cause of his reading difficulty?

Many teachers who have come to consult us at the Educational Clinic have expressed their perplexity this way: If Frank

has a reading problem, then there is probably a psychological cause. How can I cope with this? I have neither the time nor the training to get at the psychological problem.

If the teacher is conscientious and tries to help Frank with his reading, she often feels frustrated because she is treating a "mere symptom." Should Frank's mother show her concern with his reading and offer to help him, it is often interpreted as probably the root of his reading problem: pressure from "mother." It may well be that Frank's mother is pressuring him to achieve higher standards than he is able to reach. But it may just as well be a sincere concern and desire to help. Even if the teacher's assessment of Frank's problem is correct, she is limited in carrying out the necessary treatment, for this is the function of a specialist.

In our contacts with children, parents, and teachers at the City College Educational Clinic, we have begun to wonder whether teachers' confusion about their role might not stem from an overinterpretation of the facts of psychological causation. True, many children have difficulty with reading because of emotional problems. Though the teacher might be able to detect the presence of an emotional difficulty, she cannot diagnose its nature. At our clinic it takes a team of specialists — a clinical psychologist, a psychiatrist,

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pediatrician, social worker, and educational specialist—at least ten hours of testing, interviewing, and conferring to make such a diagnosis. Even then the conclusions are often tentative. There may be a psychological base for the child's learning difficulty, but often other problems exist simultaneously, such as slow maturation, visual and auditory difficulties, long absences from school in the early grades, and poor teaching.

In view of the complexity of the causal picture, and our relatively limited knowledge of the dynamic relationship between psychological factors and learning, it appears that the teacher's role might best be performed by being an understanding, competent teacher. She need not feel called upon to identify, describe, and treat the "basic" cause of the reading difficulty. Instead, she can accept the child's difficulty in learning to read and work with it. Here are a few suggestions.

First, the teacher should reorient her attitude. Reading is a serious business for the child, perhaps the most important business in his young life. Any help that a teacher can give a child with this central aspect of his life should not be underestimated as the treatment of a "mere symptom." It should be given its full weight of importance. It is important not only for his learning, but for his total adjustment. When the teacher helps a child succeed in an area where he has met consistent failure, the result can only be beneficial, no matter what the initial cause of the failure may be.

Second, the teacher should make use of all available tools to identify pupils

who are below par in reading, and to use the best techniques for helping them overcome their handicaps. If all methods prove ineffective, a reading consultant, remedial reading teacher, or a child guidance agency should be consulted.

Is the teacher, then, to ignore the child's emotional difficulties? No. She cannot, even if she tried. If the child's emotional problems are serious, they need treatment as such, and the proper referral should be made. The child's emotional problems will also show up in his learning. He will need more acceptance and encouragement than those who make normal progress. His learning progress will usually fluctuate markedly. A month may pass by when he does very well. Then he seems to "forget everything." It is then that the teacher needs to practice fully the art of good teaching, to deemphasize the child's present failure and remind him of his past success. Her confidence in his ability to learn and her patience in helping him cannot be overestimated. The child is thus helped not only with his reading, but learns to accept himself as a worthwhile human being who can succeed in spite of his difficulties.

Probably one of the most important factors overlooked in helping children with reading difficulties is the teacher. With the recent emphasis on psychological factors in learning, many teachers have underestimated their role as teachers, and have, in fact, been almost afraid to teach. Yet, they can contribute most, not by delving into the child's deeper problems, but by teaching him to read.

LUCY DE BASE

## Fun With Poetry

The creating of original poetry as a running thread throughout the year's activities was tried with a class of twenty-two second and third graders and the results have not only been quite happy but have brought some unlooked for surprises. For example, boys of eight and nine asked for poetry in our Story Time period, withdrew volumes of poetry from the public library, brought them, stuffed with bookmarks (aping the teacher) to wait for a chance to read their choices to the class; girls confiscated the teacher's books of poetry from her desk, copied favorites to read to mother or baby at home, tucked in a surprise poem of their own for the teacher to read. Along with all this, ears became noticeably sharpened to catch and feel rhythms, beat, lovely word combinations, the fun of vigorous expression.

As time permitted (and the mood was right!) the teacher read a good deal of poetry from several well known anthologies, *Time for Poetry*, *Let's Read-Together Poems*, and others, some old favorites, some new, and much of the humorous kind. Especially well liked have been the works of Dorothy Baruch, Dorothy Aldis, and Rose Fyleman.

At first, when creating their own poems, everyone more or less heard everyone else's in the process of construction. Later, as interest and enjoyment grew, a child was called up to the teacher to whisper his idea. This heightened curiosity and brought more original results.

Did all children respond and burst forth into poetry? No, a few just listened. One or two were seen frequently stealing

quietly off to the library corner to look at picture books. This disturbed us not at all. We were glad for the many who did try and found enjoyment in the experience.

A double grade set-up presents a busy day, but we seldom failed to take time out from a class or activity or just conversing informally when we felt a poem brewing. It is moments like these that brought the best results.

The sampling which follows includes some of the more interesting efforts achieved, extending from the opening of the fall term through late winter. The poems follow various units or centers of interest in the curriculum, but there were also spontaneous offerings unrelated to anything we were doing or talking about. A number of the children's own poems have been used in the choral speaking period.

We watch a college dormitory being constructed on our school grounds:

The Digger  
Dig! Dig! Dig!  
The digger digs and digs,  
It digs the sand, and dumps the sand,  
Dig! Dig! Dig!

Ann, Grade 2

Machines  
Machines, machines, do many things,  
They dig, they sing, they pull, they roll,  
They even sew!

Robert, Grade 3

Faster and Better  
Work, work, work,  
Machines do our work,  
Lifting, digging, mixing,  
Work, work, work.

Kathy, Grade 2

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Miss De Base is a teacher in the Garfield School, Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

After watching the men take down a  
120 year old oak tree near the school:

Our Oak Tree Is Down  
Aw—the oak tree is down.  
We used to stand under it  
And feel the nuts dropping  
    tap, tap, on our heads;  
The trunk was SO fat!  
We could hide there when we played  
    "Cowboys."

Mike, Grade 3

The Old Oak  
Chop, chop, chop,  
R-r-r, r-r-r, r-r-r,  
Goes the saw,  
Down comes the oak tree,  
It isn't there any more.

Don, Grade 3

Our Milwaukee Braves win the  
pennant:

The Braves Won  
Johnny Logan was on first,  
And the score was two to two,  
And then Hank was up to bat,  
He hit the ball—going, going—  
GONE over the fence,  
HOME RUN!

Jeff, Grade 3

Autumn comes:

Leaves  
The leaves fall off the trees,  
Some are burned, some are raked,  
And some we jump in,  
But the tree is just resting.

Chris, Grade 2

Much rain falls:

Thirsty Earth  
Thirsty, thirsty, earth,  
Down comes the rain,  
Splash, splash, splash,  
Dry, dry, earth  
Drinks and drinks.

Don, Grade 3

My Brother and the Rain  
Sometimes when it rains  
And thunders,  
I watch my little brother  
Crawl under the covers  
And hide.

Robert, Grade 3

Raindrops  
I watched the raindrops  
Splashing on the ground,  
They made little designs  
When they hit.

Sherry, Grade 3

Drops of Water  
Little drops of water,  
Falling down fast,  
They make big puddles,  
And puddles make ponds.

John, Grade 3

Mark breaks his collar bone:

About Mark  
Mark broke his collar bone,  
They taped his arm to him,  
And now his hand peeks out of his shirt.

Ella, Grade 2

Mark's Collar Bone  
Mark broke his collar bone,  
That's where his collar is,  
If his collar bone wasn't there  
His collar wouldn't be there either.

Jeff, Grade 3

And then came Sputnik and space:

Space  
What is in space?  
Stars, suns, planets, sputniks—  
All whirling around;  
The earth is a planet, too,  
Big and whirling,  
And we are on it.

Robert, Grade 3

The Moon  
The moon,  
Cold, hard,  
Out in the universe,  
Lights the world for us.

Don, Grade 3

Millions of Stars  
Millions and millions of stars,  
All across the sky,  
Making a design of diamonds.

Ann, Grade 2

A Star  
A star is very big, you know,  
    But I would never know it,  
Because you and I down here on earth,  
    Are many miles below it.

Kathy, Grade 2

Quiet Lynne was a little overcome  
by it all:

## The Sky

Stars so big,  
Moon so little,  
Stay as you are.

Lynne, Grade 2

## Stars

Bright, round stars,  
Twirling and whirling  
In space,  
You make ME feel  
Very . . . . . very . . . . . little.

Don, Grade 3

## Noises:

## Noises

I like the noise our car makes,  
Like when the antenna  
Hits the garage door  
And goes, BOY-N-G . . . NG . . . NG!

Charles, Grade 2

## Our new lift-lid desks:

## Desks

Click, clack! Boom, bang!  
That's the way our desks go,  
Click, clack! Boom, bang!  
They drive my teacher crazy.

Jerry, Grade 3

## Of many things:

## My Mother

I like to hug my mother hard  
In the morning,  
Do you know why?  
Because she works all night.

Ella, Grade 2

A teacher of eight-year-olds in England says, "We try to make reading as individual as possible." Another teacher of beginners in Middlesex says, "We always use a combination of reading and writing." A headmistress in an infant school in a poor city neighborhood says of her five-year-olds, "It takes us at least a year to get some of the children so they understand us and we understand them." Another teacher of five-year-olds describes her program, "First chaos and then three main groups." A headmistress in a Scottish infant department believes, "Some children are better at look-and-

## Puppies

Puppies are bouncy,  
Puppies are cute,  
They sit up, and they lie down,  
I like puppies.

Chris, Grade 2

## My Pocket

I have my new sailor pants,  
The pocket feels deep,  
It feels warm,  
I like to put my hands w-a-y down in!

Charles, Grade 2

The teacher wears an old-timer raccoon coat for playground duty. Often a youngster asks, "Is it mink?"

## Fur Coat

My teacher's coat is fur,  
She says,  
"It's just an old raccoon."  
But I like it.  
I like the feel  
When I put my arms around it  
And rest my head.

Ann, Grade 2

## Mary followed with:

## Mother's Fur Coat

My mother's fur coat  
Is soft and cuddly,  
Fur coats cost  
A lot of money,  
But mother got hers  
From Grandma.

Mary Jo, Grade 2

say and some at phonics." Another headmistress reports, "There are arguments about the value of handwriting at five years, but our children find it successful and enjoyable." Another Scottish teacher says, "Our main problem is that of low salaries and overcrowded classes with forty children in them." An English headmistress states, "Our children enjoy some routines because they don't have them in their homes."

From David H. Russell, "Primary Reading Programs in England and Scotland," *The Elementary School Journal*, May, 1957.

ADELAIDE PICOZZI

## An Approach to Individualized Reading

"How can I get my child to read?" "How can I get my child to enjoy reading?" are two questions teachers are always bombarded with by parents.

Every teacher would like to be able to answer these questions. I have found an answer, I believe, in individualized reading.

One Friday afternoon, just before leaving the school building for a week-end of relaxation, Mr. A., our school principal, gave me two magazines in which were written articles on individualized reading.

"Read them in your spare time," said Mr. A., fully realizing spare time is something of which I have little or none.

That evening, just before retiring, I picked up one of the magazines and read the article in it. It made little or no impression on my tired brain. I then picked up the second magazine and read the article in it. I began to see a little light.

During the week-end, I re-read the articles many times. The dawn began finally to break through. This was a polite way of Mr. A.'s to say, "Miss P., I would like you to try this reading with your children." Mr. A. knows that I am eager for new ideas and will always give them a fair trial.

The program sounded interesting enough, but how was I to get started? I had a class of boys and girls who were eager beavers. There were four reading groups. Two groups were reading difficult third-grade material; one group was reading easy third-grade material; the fourth was reading a "step-down" reader which is

equivalent to a hard second-grade reader.

With different reading levels, how could I get them started on individualized reading?

Christmas recess came along. During the recess I did a lot of planning and re-planning, still not satisfied. Questions ran through my head, "What about skills?" "Where will I get a sufficient number of varied books?" "How will I get them to select books on their own reading level?" "What proof will I have that they read the books?" "What will the next teacher's reaction be to this type of reading program?"

When school re-opened in January, I gathered my children in an informal discussion group. The topic of discussion was "Reading." We discussed the types of books they were interested in. Everyone belonged to the Children's Library. Once a month we took a trip to the Library. Almost every child had a library of his own at home. Some children even shared their books with others.

We made a large oaktag book, covered with construction paper. On it we listed the many types of books. Some children read one type constantly. Others branched out a wee bit; still others had read a few of each. This was to be our incentive—"How many different types of books could we read before the June closing?"

Each child made a small wheel of oaktag, about one foot in diameter. They covered these wheels with construction

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paper. The wheel was divided into wedges of eight. On each wedge was listed a different type book. A pocket was made on each wedge. As a child completed a book, he wrote on a slip of paper the title of the book and the author. These he slipped in the pocket of one of the wedges. This was one way of recording his books.

I kept a large wheel. I made it into a lazy-susan affair. With this I kept track of the books the entire class read. It was interesting and different.

From various rooms in the building, I borrowed different types of books, ranging from second grade level to sixth grade level. These were placed on a shelf in the front of the room.

On one of the counters, we had a library exchange. As a child finished a library book, he placed it on the counter. This gave the children many opportunities to select varied reading material. The entire lot of books was changed monthly.

Children brought books from their own home libraries to share. On another counter we placed them to be exchanged.

We borrowed books from the County Library.

Then, of course, we had many basic readers the children had never read. Along with these we had single, or one or more copies of reading material used to enrich our various subjects.

While our reading library was meager (we had about three hundred books), we had a good start.

Then began our reading program. The start was a gradual one.

The two highest reading groups started whole-heartedly. They read independently every day. (These groups had read two basic readers.)

While these groups read independently, I had more time to work with the two slower groups. It wasn't long before they wanted to read like the other children, selecting their own books. (These groups consisted of uninterested readers). This was just the motivation I wanted. The higher of the two groups was allowed to read independently. By April everyone was on his own, steaming away.

Each child selected a book with the understanding it was his until he had completed it. I was sure good vocabulary would result. Some children selected material that was too easy; others selected material that was too difficult. It was astonishing to see the children browse, taking time, until they found a book that was "just right."

For a few days I sat at a table in the middle of the room. I was able to observe the entire group reading silently.

When I felt the program was launched, I started checking. Each child had a sheet of paper with boxes ruled two inches square. As a child read to me, I noted the type of book, the reading difficulties, and the words missed.

We had private conferences. These conferences gave opportunities for correction and practice, free from embarrassment and criticism from the other children. These conferences gave the children confidence and encouragement to improve. If a child missed words, I typed them on a dated card. The card was put in a filing box on my desk. The child studied the words. At a future time, I rechecked them with him.

If I found a child leaned too much to one type book, I guided him with his next selection.

Time is limited, and a teacher cannot

reach many children in a reading period, so other means were employed for checking reading. Some children gave oral reports to the class. Others read a chapter of an interesting book to the children. Still others wrote brief summaries, while others employed illustrations and dioramas to share their books with us. Dramatizations entered the reading program. Some children read to the first and second-grade children.

After a week of this type of procedure, I began to think of reading skills. I made a study of all the third grade workbooks on the market. From these I made a composite check list. This was dittoed so that each child had a list. I collected all types of reading workbooks. Every child had a workbook. Each child's assignment was individual. As I checked the work page, I listed on the skill sheet the errors made. If there were many, this was my clue to give more practice on that particular skill. If there were no errors, I felt the skill had been mastered.

Often it was necessary for me to make up a skill test. I ran this off on the ditto machine.

The children thoroughly enjoyed this program, as did their teacher. The common reaction was, "We don't have to study the

I like the idea of the public library's becoming very early a part of a child's life with books. Even when a family can afford to buy a great many of its own, it seems to me that there is an intrinsic spaciousness about having almost unlimited range among books that other people handle and enjoy. This gives even very little children the chance to make their own discoveries which is good for their self-esteem. It also gives them the feel of participation in a collective possession. The public library is one

story. We can read faster and more books." Their growth was amazing. The total number of varied books they read was astonishing. The children who had been uninterested at first buried their heads in books every available minute they had. It was difficult to tear them away. Every new book attracted their eyes. Interest in every subject was enriched by the wealth of research the children made. They were just plain enthusiastic!

Individualized reading may not be the best type of reading program. It might not work as well with one group as it does with another. It has its advantages, but it also has its pitfalls. It takes time to organize the program; it takes time to reorganize weaknesses. But how gratifying it is when you see children smiling, nodding their heads, being carried away with their reading; even silently mimicking a character in the book.

I know I will attempt this reading program again next year, and much earlier in the year. Perhaps my group will be different and will require different approaches, but whatever comes, we will have some individualized program in reading. It is too enjoyable to pass up. Even I became acquainted with so many new books.

of the most truly democratic of all our institutions, being established by the people for the people, and requiring no credentials beyond the desire to make responsible use of it. That other of our best democratic institutions, the family, can find no better way to further its intention of providing what educators call "dynamic concepts" of democracy than by giving children a living experience of how the thing works.

From Annis Duff, *Longer Flight*, p. 213. (New York: The Viking Press, 1955).

INEZ MARIE WARE

## Business Letters That Should Be Written

Fifth-grader Carl had never received a business letter in all of his ten years. You can imagine his delight when one day an imposing large envelope arrived at school addressed to him from the offices of a leading steel company. Carl was so excited that he wanted to keep going to the mail box all day to see if other letters were there.

Similar degrees of enthusiasm have been evidenced in this fifth grade, taught by Edwin McQuade at the Oswego State Teachers College Campus School, as students have written business letters to obtain materials for social studies units.

Two such units this year were on iron and steel and the states. A visit to a nearby construction project and discussion on the role of iron and steel in building stimulated class interest in the first unit. The students in Room 109 then decided to write for materials on iron and steel. They investigated published lists of free and inexpensive materials and consulted manuals of instructional resources to obtain addresses of leading steel companies. Eight different firms were solicited.

Interest in correct form for business letter writing arose immediately. This class needed no dead and meaningless drill on correct headings and proper closings for letters that would end up in the waste-basket—these letters would be mailed, so they had to be right. The class consulted language arts texts for standards of correct usage in business letters. They discussed letters. They discussed capitalization, punctuation, form, and content. The teacher pointed out such items as the use of the

colon after the greeting, the use of the period for abbreviations such as Mr. and Inc., and the use of quotation marks for pamphlets. First drafts were written in pencil, corrected with the help of the teacher, and copied in ink. A few students decided to type their letters, so instruction was given concerning correct spacing in typing. A sample letter follows:

Campus School  
State Teachers College  
Oswego, New York  
November 14, 1957

United Steel Corporation  
Public Relations Department  
71 Broadway  
New York 6, New York

Dear Sir:

Mr. McQuade's fifth grade is studying about iron and steel. Would you please send us as many copies as you can of "Science in Steel-making." Would you please send them as soon as possible.

Thank you very much.

Yours truly,  
James Fowler  
Mr. McQuade's Fifth Grade

These letters met with overwhelming response. So much free material came from companies that it could not all be used in the unit. In addition, several children received personal replies from officials in companies contacted. Soon everyone in the room wanted to be "mail monitor" to pick up materials from the school receiving office.

Response precipitated by the writing of these business letters stimulated related language arts activities. Children did li-

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brary research on iron and steel and made oral and written reports. They read children's literature selections on men of iron and steel, such as *Joe Magarac and His U.S.A. Citizenship Papers* by Irwin Shapiro and *John Henry and His Hammer* by Harold W. Felton. Basic readers provided related stories, such as "Betsy Goes Mining" in the *Ginn Trails to Treasure*. A further reading source consisted of the *Reader's Digest Reading Skill Builder* which contained stories such as "Don't Look at Your Feet," an account about construction work. Spelling words pertinent to iron and steel became part of classroom learning: furnace, skip car, blast, bloom, ingot, converter, electric, and billet. Handwriting improvement needed no better impetus than the realization that business letters must be legible to the receiver.

Following the unit on iron and steel, the class studied the United States. This time each student chose three states he would like to investigate. He wrote individual business letters to the Chamber of Commerce of both the capital and the largest city in the state (Hawaii and Alaska were included). Materials requested included information of population, products, places to visit, sports, historical facts, and famous people from the state. Sex differences appeared in that girls

seemed more concerned about vacation spots and clothing of early settlers while boys requested information about sports and recreation. A sample letter follows:

Campus School  
State Teachers College  
Oswego, New York  
December 20, 1957

State Chamber of Commerce  
State Capital Building  
St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear Sir:

Our class is studying about the United States. We would like you to send us any information you can about Minnesota. We need information about how your people live, what crops are grown, sports, historical facts, etc.

Thank you for whatever help you can give us.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth Allen  
Mr. McQuade's Fifth Grade

Once again response to these business letters was more than adequate. One student received so much information on his three states that he made a special trip to one during vacation period and collected some products to bring back to class.

Schools today want children to know how to write business letters, but the proper when to write can be neglected. Students in the fifth grade discussed in this article wrote when real need arose—a need for business letters that should be written.

#### ENROLLMENTS

Throughout the past decade enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools has been increasing at the rate of about 1,000,000 per year. The present estimated total, 33,508,814, is almost 40 percent larger than 10 years ago. Each year, the typical school district is having to provide for about four additional pupils for every 100 who were in school the

preceding year.

In percentages, secondary-school enrollments are now going up faster than elementary-school enrollments. The increase of this year over last year was 4.4 percent in secondary grades and 3.6 percent in elementary grades.

From the National Education Association Research Bulletin, February, 1958 p. 9.

ROSE H. AGREE

## The School Library, 1958 . . . . .

Educators throughout the country are coming to the realization that a well equipped, well staffed, and well administered school library is one of the most effective means of realizing the aims of education in a democracy. School libraries, in their development during the past fifty years have reflected the broadening concepts of education. Today, the school library not only mirrors the curriculum but also enhances it, making the purpose of the library identical with the purpose of the school and adding another dimension to the process and progress of education. As an integral part of the school program, school library service is the responsibility of the boards of education and requires active cooperation and support at both local and state levels.

The distinctive purpose of the school library is to promote the effective use of books and libraries to meet many requirements in life. It provides individual service to each child through abundant materials of all types, reading guidance and meaningful library experiences. These experiences involve the teaching of research and study skills to ensure the maximum utilization of the many resources available in the good school library today. By no means the least of the distinctive purposes of the school library is the development of esthetic appreciation. Critical evaluation of the good and the beautiful can and should begin with the picture book age.

To function effectively, the school library cannot exist without a trained teacher-librarian, a book and materials col-

lection, and library quarters consistent with the type of school. A well equipped school library is, in reality, a communication materials center. The spoken word, the pictured idea, and the written symbol are the media of communication. All of these are employed by the school library today to extend experiences, to aid independent thinking, to furnish information on all subjects studied, to provide means of self-education and to help children become better citizens.

The school librarian carefully selects new materials to keep her collection up to date; she organizes this material for the broadest possible use by keeping abreast of and anticipating the basic daily needs of the school curriculum and by providing supplementary material of all types to teachers and pupils.

By its warm, inviting atmosphere, its comfortable, functional furniture, its attractive displays and exhibits, the school library keeps its finger on the pulse of the school.

Children come to the school library for regularly scheduled classes. They receive instruction growing out of some phase of class work requiring further research. They take home a book to read. They are encouraged to exchange ideas about books, to browse, to sample, to discover the world about them and their own place in it.

The school library today is staffed by a warm human being who is a trained li-

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brarian as well as a trained teacher. A person who loves books as well as children and knows both, her prime function is to pair the right book with the right child at the right time. She approaches her job with humor, with understanding, and with an unlimited supply of patience. She functions in many ways: to illuminate the day-to-day learning process with well chosen materials at the child's own reading level, to teach him to use the library and its resources with confidence and skill, to select materials which will stimulate him to further reading and study and to broaden his horizons with well chosen leisure time reading. Classroom teacher and librarian work together, harmoniously, complementing each other's roles and contributing their finest skills for the same net result . . . the broadest possible development of each child.

The school library of today is a well organized, efficiently administered teaching agency. It teaches not only the children, but also their teachers. If the school curriculum is to reflect the actual needs of the child in relation to himself, his family, and his community, the librarian must be aware of the bases for curriculum development and be prepared to contribute her services to the teaching staff and the prin-

cipal to help in establishing a school program in terms of children's developmental needs, the values which the school wants its students to acquire, and the demands of the community life of which the boys and girls are a part. The teachers must know intimately the resources of the library and the parallel role of classroom teaching and library teaching. Classroom teachers with a better knowledge of each child are of major importance in sharing with the librarian the important function of reading guidance and, in some instances, personality guidance as well. Thus, classroom teacher and teacher-librarian inter-relate their respective functions for their common goal—to help each child to advance to his maximum ability at his own individual rate.

Because the librarian is aware of the importance of good relations between the community and the school, she will make certain that the public library understands the distinctive purpose of the school library and their mutually inter-dependent roles. Parents, too, as well as every other possible community resource, will be brought into the picture to ensure the well rounded functioning of this important agency in the modern educational system . . . the school library.

#### TRAFFIC SAFETY

In 1957, 1,330 Americans were killed in train-car crashes.

53,000 American were injured in car-bicycle mishaps in 1957.

A total of 38,700 Americans were killed in 1957 traffic accidents.

Bad driving conditions prevailed in less than 15 percent of the fatal highway accidents in the U.S. in 1957.

In 1957, 7,500 pedestrians were killed by autos in the U.S.

Jaywalking was costly in the U.S. last year —2,600 were killed.

In 1957, 2,525,000 Americans were injured in traffic accidents.

More than 95 percent of vehicles involved in fatal accidents on U.S. highways in 1957 were in apparently good condition.

# The Process of Oral Reporting

The language arts program exists as an expanding and strengthening totality throughout the child's experience in the elementary school years.

The language arts totality is differentiated into parts for purposes of professional study, analysis, and teaching. The parts of the total language arts program are categorized in different ways, but they are commonly recognized as reading, listening, written and oral communication. In the province of oral communication are included conversation, discussion, storytelling, interviewing, and dramatization. Reporting is one of the oral language activities. We shall consider reporting as a process in a curricular context and from the viewpoints of the child-reporter and the teacher.

The oral report is a relating, telling, or narrating of ideas about which the child, as the reporter, has gathered information. Reporting is used frequently throughout the elementary school years, sometimes quite informally and at other times more formally. For example, in "sharing time" the primary child gives an informal report, often about his personal experiences and concerns. The sixth grader gives reports which range from informal to the more formal. The latter are logically sequential, and longer, such as reports in science or social studies units. The materials or ideas which are reported come from real or vicarious experience, or combine both. The child-reporter's purpose is to share the content—whatever that may be—with an audience.

## *Teacher Evaluation of Children's Reports*

A teacher's evaluation of the achievement of individuals and of the group in oral reporting should be made early in the year and also at later times during the year. Such initial and continuing analyses will focus attention on growth, on achievement, and on needed teaching emphases.

As part of becoming acquainted with the class, the teacher makes a preliminary survey and diagnosis in several school subjects, such as reading, arithmetic, handwriting, and spelling. Oral reports may properly be part of this initial evaluation. They have not been commonly included because oral reports are more difficult to evaluate. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that, unlike some subject areas, the children's oral reports do not produce lasting, tangible products. A product that is put on paper may be studied and evaluated by the teacher for as long a time as necessary. The report, which in this process is the product, is ephemeral, in the sense that it is not tangible or permanent. It is gone and cannot be exactly recalled or reproduced after the child has finished speaking. The solution lies in evaluating reports as they are given, and, to do that well, pre-planning by the teacher is needed. This planning gives consideration to such points as: the classroom and curricular possibilities when children may report; the points in children's reporting skill which are to be observed; and methods of record keeping, such as checklists and anecdotal

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records.

The evaluation may be formal with every child making a report. This is sometimes done by asking each child to report on a given topic, such as summer vacation, families, pets, or hobbies. The expectation that all children have the requisite background is sometimes fallacious. A series of reports with each child taking his turn in a concentrated length of time—such as a two or three day period—might seem to give an equal and comparable situation as a basis for evaluation. In practice, the effect is so boring to both children and teacher that—except for the fortunate few who report first—it is an unfair basis on which to evaluate.

A less formal approach uses self-selection of topics which makes for greater spontaneity in speaking and more interest in listening. In the first days of school, each child can report more naturally if opportunities are given in the various curricular areas. All-school activities and plans for the year, such as the student council, the school paper, the hall bulletin board, and the school safety patrol, can be used for some reports. This is continued until each child has had his chance to report in a reasonable situation. Subject matter from the units in social science, current events, science, literature, art, health may be used with each child giving a short report on self-selected material.

The comprehensiveness of the evaluation that is undertaken by the classroom teacher should be adjusted according to several factors. An important one of these factors is the curricular purposes and the amount and quality of the subsequent experiences to be offered the learners. Another is the developmental level of the

children. This is related to the expectancy in both the initial survey of status and in the growth achieved with instruction. A more complete evaluation is suited to older children who, of course, have advanced to higher developmental levels.

It has been seen, then, that the teacher's evaluation of children's oral reporting which is one strand of oral communication, should be planned and directed. It should be of both initial status and of later growth and its comprehensiveness should be adjusted to specific, local factors. An evaluative situation provides the child with something which he wishes to report, a purpose in reporting, an interested audience, and a comfortably informal atmosphere.

#### *Suggested Guide to Evaluation*

A checklist is an aid in directing the teacher's evaluation and in making it more systematic. The following is given as suggestive and may be changed and adapted to specific situations.

#### *Checklist for Evaluating Oral Reports*

##### I. The Class-as-a-Whole

- A. Attitudes, as shown by
  - behavior when preparing and giving reports
  - comments following reports
  - conceptions of "good" reports

- B. Interests, as shown in
  - choice of topics
  - response of listeners
  - enthusiasm
  - amount of material

- C. Level of reporting skills, in which the class is
  - above average attainment
  - average attainment
  - below average attainment

D. Range of reporting skills, in which the class is  
 similar (narrow range)  
 variable (wide range)  
 adequate for demands of situation

F. Language  
 grammar  
 pronunciation  
 vocabulary

G. Speech  
 enunciation  
 pitch of voice  
 volume  
 voice quality

## II. The Individual

- A. Individual interests, as shown by  
 choice of topics  
 points of emphasis  
 degree of interest and enthusiasm  
 allusions indicating other interests and experiences
- B. Personality characteristics, such as  
 degree of  
 poise  
 confidence  
 independence  
 friendliness
- C. Reaction of the group to the individual, as shown by  
 interested listening  
 questions or comments  
 disinterest or hostility
- D. Ability to communicate ideas and content with  
 ease and effectiveness  
 accuracy  
 arouse appropriate attitudes and feelings in listeners  
 arouse interest and response in listeners

- E. Mental processes and habits  
 logical thinking  
 organization  
 thoroughness  
 open-mindedness  
 critical thinking

### *Group Requirements for a Report*

The problem of what constitutes a good oral report is an appropriate one for group discussion. The discussion gives the class and individual children an understanding of the requirements that are inherent in the process of reporting and a basis for directing their future efforts. The shared ideas which come forth may be new to some children and are a source of assurance to many. It is reassuring to make explicit the demands of the oral reporting task, so that the child knows what he is to do and how to proceed.

The question, "What must we be able to do in order to give a good oral report?" is one with which children can deal. It stresses the child as self-active and responsible. From the free interplay of ideas in discussion, major points appear and are agreed upon. Next they are arranged in order by the class, as in the following teaching chart:

What must we be able to do in order to give a good oral report?

1. Decide on a topic.
2. Locate materials.
3. Select information to present to the class.
4. Put information in order.
5. Make notes or an outline to use when speaking.

6. If pictures, maps, or examples are used, plan when and how they accompany the report.
7. Use good speech techniques—speak clearly and with interest, look at the audience, etc.

The oral report is a truly complex activity. In it are integrated several of the language arts and areas of content. The list in the preceding chart indicates that the language arts which are involved include a wide range of requisite skills, abilities, attitudes and knowledge. They are fused with another considerable range of social skills, intellectual requirements, and informational background. The child as he reports is the one who accomplishes this complex fusion.

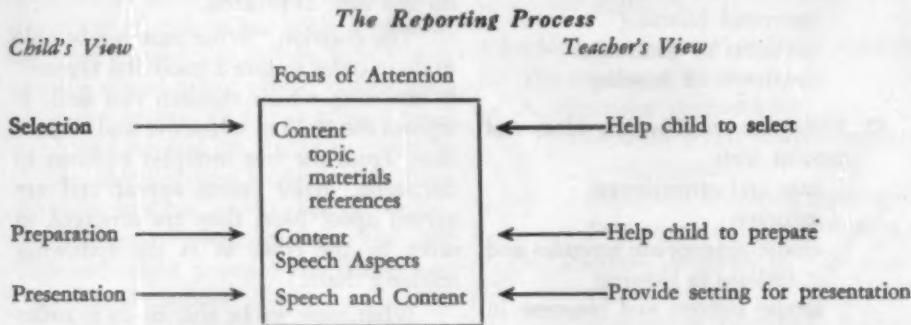
How can teaching assist the pupil in meeting this requirement? An over-all frontal attack on the many needs of a class will not be a reasonable instructional procedure. Rather, a choice of one or a few related points should be made and have

rather concentrated effort by teacher and children. *What* is chosen can be decided on the basis of the teacher's evaluation of the class. The extent to which there is individualization of the instruction depends on the teacher, the class size, and the nature of the needs. When one point has improved, the teaching centers on another area of need.

#### *The Process of Oral Reporting*

The demands on the child of making an oral report are different from the demands on the teacher as he helps the child to report, but they are related.

The child sees that his task is *to report*—as well and as interestingly as possible. The teacher sees that his instructional task is *to help the child to report*—to a level which is satisfying to the child and consonant with his abilities. The activities of the child and of the teacher as they move in a reciprocal and related way in the process of reporting are shown in the chart.



The first decision from the child's view is to *select*—the content, ideas, or information for his report. For the older child, the process of selection often requires considerable searching if he must make a choice from a broad topic. Next, the child must *prepare* both the content and speech as-

pects. In selecting the content, he decides on his main points, the introduction and the conclusion, what supplementary aids he will use and when to use them, the order in which he will present his points, and make an outline or notes. In preparation for the speech aspect of the report,

the child gives thought to voice quality and volume, pronunciation and enunciation. Perhaps he will practice alone, with another child, or with a small group. As the child *presents* the report, he will synthesize the content, the organization, and the speech aspects which he has carefully planned. He will hope to produce a clearly understood, interesting report which gives him satisfaction. The child's activity in reporting is a flow of activity.

The teacher's view of the process roughly parallels the child's view. The teacher helps the child with *selection* through providing varied materials and references and with group and individual discussions to help in the choice-making process. He helps the child *prepare* the content of the report by being sure that the child understands the ideas, that he can select and organize them into a logical order, that he has the necessary reading skills, that he can make a useable outline or set of notes. The teacher makes provision for individuals or small groups of children to practice in order to improve their speech skills. The teacher provides the setting and atmosphere which are important to the child's *presentation* of his report. The physical arrangement of the

room and the teacher's remarks and attitude are consciously devised to give a psychologically relaxed, interested, and accepting atmosphere. The child's feeling of satisfaction with his report is considerably dependent on the response by the teacher and the class. The teacher, again, sets the tone.

#### *Summary*

Oral reporting is a process which is a part of the total communication program in the elementary school. It is a process which is frequently used and is complex in nature. As he reports, the child integrates the large areas of the language arts which are involved, i.e., speech, reading, writing, grammar, etc., with the also large and multiple areas from which he draws the content and information of the oral report. A preliminary survey and continuing evaluation of the status and needs of each pupil and of the total class provide the teacher with a basis for instruction. Children's awareness and understanding of the requirements of oral reports can be increased. There is a reciprocal relation in the roles of the child and of the teacher as they move through the process of producing an oral report.

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"Satellites, Schools and Survival" is the title of a half-hour television film on the relation of the American educational system to America's survival as a free nation. Filmed by Telenews and produced by the National Education association in cooperation with state education associations, it contains interviews with noted American citizens, a dramatic segment on the

development of the present American educational system since 1900, and a section featuring teachers and students in an eighth-grade science class. Narrator: Charles Van Doren. Participants: H. Rowan Gaither, Jr.; Senator Lyndon B. Johnson; James R. Killian, Jr.; Richard M. Nixon and William G. Carr.

## Into the World of Books

The silent yet eloquent world of books is waiting for the child. If he can enter it, knowing how to read, enjoy, and evaluate books, he possesses a key to knowledge and pleasure.

How and where does he acquire this ability? The home can begin to develop it, but the school has assumed the greater responsibility for this task. However, it is the teacher in the classroom who can guide the child toward this purpose.

Because I am firmly convinced of the importance of reading, and its influence on the growing mind, I developed a project to interest children in the reading of books for pleasure. In developing the plan I felt a need for an overview. "Do the children need this guidance? Do they have time to read? What reading are the children doing already?" I asked myself. Records revealing many important factors were available, but none showed how far the child had progressed in his love of reading.

Since I could not speak to the parents individually, I prepared a questionnaire for them and their children. One of the questions for the parents was, "Does your child watch television every day?" The answers showed that twenty-four of the thirty children enrolled in my class did. The six who did not watch every day had the higher I. Q. and came from homes of slightly higher standards than the rest of the community. The children liked school.

"Does your child read for pleasure every day?" — showed this result—fourteen out of thirty did not read at all. Yet they certainly must have found time to watch television. The atmosphere of the

home was not turned to reading.

"Do you buy books for your children?" Only four parents admitted that they did not. The books were usually from the five and ten cent stores, abridged, or from a book club. No thought was given to children's interests or ability. A boy, whose achievement level in reading was below fourth grade, proudly showed me a book that his parents had bought from *Life* magazine. The book was good, but the child could hardly read the captions or understand them. Some of the weakest readers belonged to book clubs, which offered the best children's classics. Yet, none of them had been read by the child.

Then I asked the children, "What do you like to do best after school?" Eighteen liked to play; one wanted to rest; three liked to eat and read; and the others did their homework and read after school. The home was definitely influencing their activities.

"Do you have time to read?" was another question. I compiled a picture of their activities. Most of them played. Then they had their dinner, helped with some home chores, watched television, did their homework, and then went to bed. If one assigns only thirty or forty minutes to each activity, where is time for the child to withdraw from the nervous hurry of the day, to the world of make-believe, to distant places of stars and seas? Besides that, time had to be found for scout meetings, music lessons and practice, attendance at plays, birthday parties, visits or re-

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ceiving visitors. Could the school compete with "I Love Lucy," "Mickey Mouse," or "Nickelodeon"?

I searched for material. First I discovered the "Library Club of America," a non-profit organization, sponsored by the book publishers. They offered three pins, each better-looking than the other, for reading four books, six books, and eight books. An impressive banner could be hung in the room also. The teacher was free to determine the method of distributing the pins and the reading program. *Newstime*, a fourth and fifth grade newspaper, published by Scholastic Magazines, offered twice a year a selected group of books, priced at twenty-five or thirty-five cents. The librarian at the public library helped me compile a list of books, graded in difficulty, varied in topic, as the readers were. I made a chart on which the children could mark their reported books. Sometimes it was a house whose shingles were books, sometimes a clown whose dots on his costume were made by books, some a tree whose fruits were trees.

More than ever, I surrounded them with books. There were some ungraded books to which I introduced them. When the social studies lesson told about Paul Revere, or George Washington, I read to them from a suitable book. When the children read in their reader about children's activities, I had books handy. I read to them an interesting section and allowed some eager readers to take them over night. From that, it was very easy to present the reading list, the pins, and the charts. Naturally, I checked up on their reading. Every Thursday morning, oral reports were given. Some days the children were allowed to dress as their characters.

They were also allowed to make written reports. This was done in order to be efficient in handing out pins.

At the end of the five-month period, there were seven who had read ten books. All the rest, except six, had read four books or less than ten. There were six who had not even read four. There were many reasons why those children could not even reach the average number of books read. One of them was a boy who was sent to juvenile court. If he had learned to find vicarious thrills in reading good books, instead of comics, perhaps this would not have happened.

The time for the reading was taken from television by most of the children. Saturday and Sunday were also good days to dip into books. After school was the time taken to visit the public library. No parent complained to me that his child didn't want to do his chores in order to read. Those who talked to me told me that their children seemed to love to read.

What books did the children read? They had access to some ungraded books which were in the classroom. Though I did not encourage the better reading group to read them, I am sure though that all the children were interested in them. Besides that, I had other books to show to the class.

These books were read by two or more children in the class:

Betsy's Little Star	C. Haywood
Daniel Boone	E. Averill
George Washington	D'Aulaire
Little House on the Prairie	L. I. Wilder
Eddie and His Big Deals	C. Haywood
(all the others in that series were very popular.)	
Dinny and Danny	E. Slobodkin
Nicky's Football Team	M. Renick

The popularity of a book was deter-

mined by the enthusiasm with which the child gave a report, by teacher approval, by the humor of the book, by the fact that the book was reported on by a student who was admired by all the rest.

Most of the books were in the 3-5 grade level, according to the *Children's Catalog*. There were a few below and a few above. Generally, the children picked books that they could read and enjoy. They also were commended if they finished reading a book.

Here are some individual lists. This child was most cooperative, and most admired in the class. She was an excellent student:

The Young Aunts

- Betty's Little Star
- The Jungle Book
- The Impractical Chimney Sweep
- Little House on the Prairie
- Half Magic
- After the Sun Sets
- Wilderness Journey
- Betsy and Tacy Go Over the Big Hill

This boy read only along one line of interest:

- Cowboy Sam and the Fair
- Railroad Cowboy
- Nicky's Football Team
- Ten Gallon Hat
- Lary's Luck
- Mystery of the Five Bright Keys
- Busby and Co.
- Miss Posy Longlegs
- A Ranch for Danny

This girl picked the following four books, because, as she said in her reports, they were funny:

- Half Magic
- Wobbly Wheels

Five Little Peppers and How They Grew	E. Sidney
Three Birthday Wishes	R. L. Holberg

This child had different books in her list:

Molly in the Middle	F. Lattimore
Paul Bunyan Swings his Ax	D. McCormick
The Sodhouse	E. Coatsworth
Bright April	M. L. Chastain

The habit of reading, or becoming engrossed in a book, was sadly lacking in some children. They could not finish a whole book even if it contained only sixty pages. Sometimes I would start for them a whole, thin book and then after reading several pages aloud would offer them the book. Some never even finished that one. Perhaps with continued attention from the teacher, in the next few semesters, they will be able to concentrate on one theme.

The children gained from buying their own books. They were at their level, both in vocabulary and content. There were a few good stampbooks and a few classics. I offered some suggestions, when some children bought books beyond their reading ability. Some bought many books; some parents took a great deal of interest in helping their children select them.

The end of the semester came all too soon. No one had earned the gold or last pin, but all had been given a glimpse into the world of books. Those who had not been so successful as the others had at least been brushed by the wonder of reading.

But those who read eagerly, willingly, and joyfully, will find in books the answers to their questions, comfort from the words of the great, and the pleasure of meeting all the varied characters that come alive only in books.

- E. Eager
- E. Moore

O. L. DAVIS, JR.

## Reading At The School Camp

At the assembly area, shaded by tall trees, a group of teen-agers is silent, each of them resting. One girl is asleep, sprawled across a blanket. Another is busy "putting up" her hair and fighting a pesky fly at the same time. A boy sitting at the base of a persimmon tree watches a squirrel play in the top branches of a neighboring pine. A boy, no, a bobbed-haired, jeans-clad girl is reading a book. Sitting nearby, a boy whittles absent-mindedly on a cedar branch. Two more weeks and school will be out. Now, it is rest time, a pause, before the school camp jumps back to life with a hike, a fishing trip, or another outdoor project.

A visitor to the school camp might be discouraged at the apparent scarcity of books and other reading materials. Even during rest period, only one book! Another might well observe that even one book is a surprising object in such an environment.

Many schools are involved in outdoor education programs that include time spent at a school camp. Looking to the future, it is reasonably safe to estimate an increase in the number of schools that send children to camp during the regular school year. Through experiencing in the out-of-doors, children are able to live the stories they can only read and hear in school. The situations which arise in a pupil-teacher community provide many opportunities for rich teaching-learning activities.

Since the inception of school camping, its advocates have emphasized nature study in its many forms and learning about con-

servation as forming the basis for the camp program. Other normal school activities, such as arithmetic, social studies, and the language arts, have sometimes been relegated to the status of "classroom subjects" and have not been recognized as areas of concern at camp. School camping philosophy is soundly based on the idea that the pupil should learn in the outdoors only that which he cannot learn better inside the classroom. Agreeing with this philosophy, questions are immediately raised: What is the place of reading at the school camp? How can the school camp contribute to the improvement of children's reading?

It is important to remember that the school camp is nevertheless school although it is out-of-doors. It is a place for learning, almost solely by actual experiencing. The camp period is also a time in which pupil experiences in the out-of-doors and group living may be enriched and interests in the natural world may be extended. Therefore, at camp, books are not, as they rightly are at school, the principal source of learning materials. It is the natural environment in which the child lives that provides the sources for learning. It necessarily follows that reading materials have a rather minor role to play in the affairs of a group's living together at camp. There are, in addition, other factors upon which the place of reading materials at camp depend. Particularly is this true in

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regard to the maturity of the children, and the length of the camp period. The observations and descriptions of reading at camp which follow were derived from the 1956 camping session of the Eighth Grade of Peabody Demonstration School. This class of 13- and 14-year old children went to school camp for ten days as a regular part of its year's program.

At camp, as in the classroom, reading may be divided into two general categories: informational and recreational. On a hike, a child may see and wonder about an amphibian, an ant colony in a tree, a beautiful but unfamiliar bird, or countless other things. Back at the camp, he may want to search for answers to his aroused curiosity. At slack times and at regularly scheduled rest periods, a pupil may desire to pick up a book or a magazine as a relaxing diversion from the day's activities. These two needs should be recognized and adequate materials provided to meet them.

What kind of reading materials should be taken to the school camp? The camp program is normally loosely structured, recognizing that many things will arise which cannot be anticipated. There are usually well-defined limits to the space available for shelving of books and magazines at camp and certainly a limitation to the camping period. Thus, the materials must be well selected for their potential value to the pupils.

The camp library is easy to administer. The children are probably familiar with the operations of a library at school, perhaps in their own room. Depending on the maturity of the children, the physical location of the camp library, and other factors, accounting procedures for the books can be tailored to the situation. It has been

found desirable by some groups to use the same library assistants at camp as those who help at school.

#### *Reading for Information<sup>1</sup>*

Reference works might well include: a set of encyclopedias; guides (handbooks) to specific studies, i.e. stars, birds, weather, reptiles, and fish; general reference books on nature topics, i.e. rocks, fossils, balance of nature, and weather; manuals and handbooks about camping; books to use in planning recreation and worship services<sup>4</sup>; and song books.<sup>2</sup>

Reference works are therefore seen as the single source of informational reading. No textbooks? That is absolutely correct. Every child may use a textbook in the classroom but living and seeing and feeling at camp is such an individual, personal experience that a single source would shackle him. A few copies of books, normally classified as "texts," should be included because of their easy reading value as reference materials must be in accord with a sound school camping concept and the specific objectives of the group going to camp. Choices must be made to keep the collection manageable and large enough to cater to the demands of the entire class.

It is imperative to remember, that even reading for information at the school camp must be kept voluntary, dependent only on the kindled interests of the children.

#### *Reading for Pleasure*

Time available for recreational reading is very limited at the school camp. Most programs emphasize doing and a schedule full of hiking, building, drawing, collecting, observing, and working leaves little time which can be used to sit and read. Besides, with so many things to do,

most children will use their "free" time telling their classmates of their experiences, planning and preparing for the next activity, "just sitting and doing nothing," or simply dreaming. In view of the basic philosophy of outdoor education, such situations are wholesome. Recreational reading can be done when they return to school and when they get home where there won't be an opportunity to see so many tall trees, to watch the river bend its way along the edge of the camp, to collect rocks and fossils, and to lean against an oak tree and reflectively observe the antics of a granddaddy longlegs.

Some children, however, like adults, will read anywhere, anytime, almost impervious to the enticing splendor of their surroundings. Such children will want to and will read an entire novel in their free time at camp. At the same time some children won't want to see even the back of a book at camp, much less read one. Both attitudes should be recognized.

Thus, a limited variety of recreational reading materials should be available for those who want something to read when they feel they have time. These materials may be divided into two classifications according to the length of time required to read them: lengthy materials which consist of novels, and short selections which include volumes of short stories and poems, magazines, and books of cartoons.

Those children who think they might have time to read a novel at camp should be encouraged to select a title from the school library and take it to camp with them. This procedure reduces the number of books that must be transported to camp as a part of the library managed there and returned to school. It also serves to

emphasize the underlying idea of outdoor education that this kind of reading can probably be done best away from camp. Children may be helped to understand the importance of wise selection and standards of good literature as they plan what, if any, books they are to take to camp.

A few volumes of short stories and poems, copies of magazines and books of cartoons need to be taken to camp.<sup>3</sup> A child tends to pick up a volume of short stories or a magazine story to read during the rest period. Some magazines and the cartoon books provide opportunities for a brief period of time for relaxation during the short time interval before meals and between some activities.

Comic books prove to be a menace to some school camps, as they do at some schools. Their threat is more imagined than real at both, if the program is challenging and appealing to the interest and needs of the pupils. The essential element of comic book antidote is the camp program. The vicarious thrill of fantastic people and places runs a very poor race against the enthusiasm of living and learning in the outdoors. A reasonable approach to comics also includes realistic pre-planning and guidance in pupil decision-making. Comic books may be "standard equipment" for some children for they know them well and rely upon them. Pupils tend to respond positively to the prospect of doing new things, of doing well with a few facilities. Comic books are symbols of what they can leave behind when they go to camp, like television, radio, newspaper and the corner drug store.

Even with good pre-planning and a good program, comic books sometimes appear at the school camp. They are seldom

a threat to the program and regulations if handled effectively. There seem to be two principal reasons for comics getting to and being read at camp: (1) comic sequences are very short, require little reading effort, and can be finished in a few moments of relaxation; (2) camp is an opportunity to taste fruit forbidden by parents. Neither of these reasons poses a hostile barrier to a good reading program. Both are easily understood by discerning teachers and can be effectively met through wise and sympathetic counsel, and by having at hand types of reading material that will appeal.

#### *The Camp's Contribution to Reading*

Some books and other reading materials are important and valuable to the success of a good school camp. More important, however, is the contribution made to the readers by the camp. Reading skills can and will be taught in the classroom. The school camp is peculiarly suited to aid in enriching the child's experiential background from which his understandings arise. Some camps may aid this development more than others; all present numerous opportunities for the child to increase his understanding of the world about him. The more real, first-hand experiences he has, the more closely he can identify and give meaning to similar incidents about which he reads.

Living in the outdoors with adults and other boys and girls, the pupil must meet and satisfactorily solve the social realities of life. Cooking, washing dishes, scrubbing the cabin clean, and gathering wood are not frills; they are necessary for effective group living. Some of the activities involve work, difficult physical effort. The jobs must be completed. Rest comes ago-

nizingly slow, yet is refreshingly sweet.

Participating in a variety of projects, the child is brought into contact with nature and people in countless ways. Collecting, building, walking, and watching many things open the door to eager questioning and dreaming. Sitting at the river's edge and listening quietly as the rushes gently caress one another, the mockingbird singing in a nearby tree, and the gentle splash of water as a turtle submerges, the child recognizes many sounds he never knew. Watching the garish dance of a cedar campfire, the lonesome flight of the moon across the night sky, and the sweat bursting out on the faces of boys cutting down a tree, the pupil is struck by a visual image that will cling to him forever. The ten-mile hike, its seemingly endless journey after the canteens have been hastily and foolishly emptied, the walk, stop, walk, the laggards who slow everyone else down, and the throbbing ache of sore muscles will be remembered long afterward.

Such experiencing is invaluable to one who would read. A person cannot really sympathize with the agony of a forced march unless he, too, has known the pain of blistered feet and taut leg muscles. The imagery of the poet is made clear when the reader himself has witnessed the beauty and the harshness which evoked the word picture. Reading becomes more meaningful as the reader increases his store of experiences on which he draws for understanding. The school camp is an unequaled school activity by which children's experiential background may be enriched.

#### *Summary*

The school camp offers unique opportunities for many valuable learnings by

pupils. Reading has an important role to play in this activity. In order to find out about what he has seen, has found, has heard, the child reads to learn. Perhaps, for some, this takes place at camp. For most children, however, their aroused interest will ferret out more information after returning from camp. To stop and read might be to miss something else. Some well-selected reference volumes should be available at the campsite in order that those who desire may read while the interest is high. For those who wish, recreational reading materials should be accessible. When a good camp program is developed after careful pre-planning with pupils, comic books will provide no problem.

The school camp can make a significant contribution to the enrichment of children's reading. The varied activities of the camp can instil a strong desire to read to learn more about many things when the child returns to the classroom and can develop increased understandings about people and the natural world which makes more meaningful that which is read.

<sup>1</sup>The reference works listed here and the choices for recreational reading described below were developed for the 1956 camp session by the class and in Co-operation with Miss Ada McCaa, Peabody Demonstration School librarian. As a part of its pre-camp planning, the class divided itself into several nature study interest groups. These groups (concerned with birds, snakes, fish, flowers, etc.) reported their findings to the entire class and, among other things, made recommendations as to books or manuals which would prove valuable to everyone at camp.

*If I had but one wish to make, it would be that every child have someone who loves him enough to READ TO HIM, from the time he prowls the crib searching for something soothing like a nursery rhyme, through the years when he seeks the thrill of adventure and new discovery, to the time when "reading to" con-*

<sup>2</sup>Some of the books taken for reference are listed below:

- Baker, Robert H. *When the Stars Come Out*. New York, 1934.
- Bancroft, J. H. *Games*. New York, 1937.
- Field, H. Durand. *Field Book of Common Ferns*. New York, 1949.
- Harbin, E. O. *The Fun Encyclopedia*. Nashville, 1940.
- Jaques, H. E. *How to Know the Trees*. Dubuque, 1946.
- Kieran, John. *An Introduction to Birds*. Garden City, 1950.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *An Introduction to Trees*. Garden City, 1954.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *An Introduction to Wild Flowers*. Garden City, 1952.
- Lutz, F. E. *Field Book of Insects*. New York, 1948.
- Mathews, F. S. *Field Book of American Trees and Shrubs*. New York, 1915.
- Mathews, F. S. *Field Book of American Wild Flowers*. New York, 1927.
- Music Subcommittee of National Board of Young Women's Christian Association. *Hymns*. New York.
- Palmer, R. S. *The Mammal Guide*. Garden City, 1954.
- Peterson, R. T. *Wildlife in Color*. Boston, 1951.
- Reed, W. Maxwell. *Patterns in the Sky*. New York, 1951.
- Sloane, Eric. *Eric Sloane's Almanac and Weather Forecaster*. Boston, 1955.
- Spilhaus, A. F. *Weathercraft*. New York, 1951.
- Swain, Susan N. *Insects in Their World*. Garden City, 1955.
- West, James E., Hillcourt, William. *Scout Field Book*. New Brunswick, 1954.
- Zinn, H. S., Martin, A. C. *Flowers*. New York, 1950.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Gabrielson, I. N. Birds*. New York, 1949.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Smith, H. M. Reptiles and Amphibians*. New York, 1953.
- Zinn, H. S., Martin, A. C. *Trees*. New York, 1952.

<sup>3</sup>At the Peabody camp, magazines such as *Boy's Life*, *American Girl*, and *Saturday Evening Post* were popular. Two books of cartoons were successfully used:

Key, Ted. *Hazel Rides Again*. New York, 1955, and Johnson, Lucy, editor. *Cartoon Treasury*. Garden City, 1955.

sists, perhaps, of sharing choice literary "tid-bits" over the dinner table.

From Charlotte F. W. Knapp, "Stimulating the Child to Read Independently," *The Child's Personal Reading*. Monograph 6 of the New York State English Council, 1957.

## The Gifted Child

In the field of education  
There has been much speculation  
On a theme, that unlike Nato  
Has been pondered on since Plato.

The teacher with this problem grapples  
As she munches on her apples.  
And experts argue pro and con  
The merits of this question on:

What's to be done with the gifted child?  
Integrated or exiled?  
Accelerated through the years?  
Separated from his peers?

Should we let him have the chance,  
If he's brainy, to advance,  
By the law of recompense  
From the ranks of those more dense?

Or should he stay within his group;  
Learn fractions with the nincompoop;  
Hear the lesser minds recite  
In stilted monologue, and trite?

"Our schools are making stereotypes  
Of youth today," one faction gripes.  
"Homogenize your margarine,  
But with our kids don't intervene.

"Don't sentence geniuses to tedium  
By association with the medium.  
Let leaders of our master race  
Move forward at a faster pace.

"For other nations excel in science  
By growing intellectual giants,  
But scientifically we languish,"  
These mentors cry aloud in anguish.

"So let us isolate the clever,  
By increasing their endeavor;  
They will soon acquire knowledge  
For pre-requisites to college.

"By learning on a faster scale  
Our progeny can enter Yale  
In tender years, and win acclaim  
By climbing pinnacles of fame.

"By cultivation of the mind  
We will benefit mankind  
And win with valedictory  
The intellectual victory."

• • •  
"What an asinine idea!  
If you think it is a panacea  
For the ills within our system,  
Brother, think again!

"In the first place, who's to choose  
The talented with the high IQ's?  
Who is going to characterize  
The upper strata of the wise?

"What system will you use to ferret  
The lads and lasses who will merit  
This program of acceleration?  
Your problem is IDENTIFICATION!

"You'll find your premises are eerie  
When you analyze your theory;  
And you'll find them even eerier  
When selecting the superior.

"Top educators don't agree  
On who should have the pedigree.  
Froehlic wrote a book in German;  
Research has been done by Terman.

---

Mrs. Huffman is from Choteau, Montana.

"The question is, how high a guy  
Has to rate to justify  
Being labelled perspicacious?  
(Or at any rate, sagacious).

"You will find your problem's nature  
To be one of nomenclature.  
Gifted, bright, and rapid learner—  
Who will deign to be discerner?

"Some kinds are dumb in kindergarten,  
But in a year or two, they smarten.  
Gaining more maturity  
Provides them with security.

"Others prove that factors mental  
Are often purely accidental,  
(If we haplessly give credence  
To biased tales of antecedents").

"Some will brazenly disparage  
The other partner of the marriage,  
Especially if the youngster's mater  
Plays the role of evaluator.

"You will find that at this junction  
Your theory will cease to function,  
And you will revert to age  
As the classification gauge."

\* \* \*

"Your implications are not subtle!  
We offer forthwith a rebuttal.  
In nothing do we acquiesce,  
Save—a problem exists, we do confess.

"The teachers with their instincts shrewd  
Will be the ones who will conclude,  
As they walk along the aisles,  
Who are the gifted juveniles.

"They are the potentates who'll cull  
The intellectuals from the dull.  
In sundry ways they will observe  
Where each appears upon the curve.

"We maintain the teacher needn't  
Dwell upon an antecedent.  
Whether Junior eats his cereal  
Is somewhat immaterial.

"He may have constant quibblings  
With his parents and his siblings,  
*But* if he passes an official quiz,  
That reveals he really is a whiz.

"If he adds the digits a column  
Without fidgets, erstwhile solemn  
And his grasp upon the pencil  
Reveals some tendencies prehensile;

"If he has correct reactions  
To the problems in abstractions  
And he reads with comprehension,  
As he speeds sans tics or tensions;

"Then the teacher may suspect  
He has superior intellect.  
The problem is this—  
We have found the thinker.  
**NOW WHAT DO WE DO WITH  
THE LITTLE STINKER?**

---

The most recent in the distinguished series of Proceedings of the University of Chicago summer conferences on reading is *Materials for Reading*, compiled and edited by Helen M. Robinson (The University of Chicago Press, 1957). The uses of basal readers, textbooks, and general reading from kindergarten through junior college are discussed with a view to providing practical aid to the classroom teacher. List price, \$3.50.

# First-Grade Achievement Under Different Plans of Grouping

## *Introduction*

Authorities in the teaching of reading do not agree as to the best method of grouping to provide instruction for children of different readiness levels. Some authorities recommend that differences in readiness be provided for in each classroom, while others recommend that children of low-readiness status be placed in separate classrooms for instruction. The results of experimental studies are inconclusive concerning the effectiveness of learning under different plans of grouping to provide instruction in reading for children of different readiness status.

Those who advocate placing low-readiness status children in separate classrooms for reading instruction apparently assume that a more effective readiness program can be provided for the low-readiness status children. It is sometimes also assumed that the more mature children can progress more rapidly since the classroom teacher is free to devote more time to working with the pupils of higher readiness status.

This study was made for the purpose of comparing the achievement in reading during grade one of children who worked under two plans of grouping. Under one plan the low-readiness pupils were placed in separate classrooms; under the other plan the low-readiness pupils remained in the regular classroom. Under both plans "grouping" was practiced within the classroom. The same basal reading materials were used during the two years in which achievement in reading was studied.

## *Procedure*

The children who were included in this study were Anglo-American children who entered the Amarillo, Texas, Public Schools for the first time at the age of six years during the school years 1952-53 and 1953-54. As a meas-

ure of readiness status the Metropolitan Readiness Tests, Form R, were administered to the children who were entering school for the first time. These tests were administered soon after the beginning of the school year before reading instruction was begun. In September of 1952 the children who scored below 65 on the Metropolitan Readiness Tests were placed in separate classrooms. In 1953 the children remained in the classrooms to which they were originally assigned. As a measure of reading achievement the reading sub-tests of the Gray-Votaw-Rogers General Achievement Tests, Primary Test, Form Q, were administered to the children at the beginning of their second school year. Children who first entered school in September of 1952 were given the reading tests in September of 1953, and the children who first entered school in September of 1953 were given the reading tests in September of 1954.

On the basis of the readiness test scores the pupils were classified as to low-, average-, or high-readiness status. Pupils scoring 0-64 on the readiness tests were classified as low-readiness status, those scoring 65-84 were classified as average-readiness status, and those scoring 85-100 were classified as high-readiness status. These classifications were made in order that the achievement of similar readiness status groups could be compared.

Before reading achievement was studied, 1952-53 pupils were paired with 1953-54 pupils on the basis of the following factors:

1. Same teacher. Paired pupils were taught by the same teacher.
2. Chronological age. The ages of the paired pupils did not differ by more than three months. All pupils were six years

Dr. Bremer is Director of Elementary Instruction in the Amarillo, Texas, Public Schools.

of age at school entrance.

3. Readiness test scores. Readiness test scores did not differ by more than three points.

4. Sex. Paired pupils were of the same sex.

5. Class size. Paired pupils worked in classes of similar size. Class size did not differ by more than three pupils. The average number of pupils per class was twenty-five.

6. Half-days or full days. Pupils who attended half-days in 1952-53 were paired with pupils who attended half-days in 1953-54. The same procedure was used in pairing pupils who attended on a full-day basis.

7. Attendance. The attendance records of paired pupils did not differ by more than fifteen days.

8. Socio-economic status of the family. This phase of the pairing was done on the basis of similar residence areas.

### Results

Table I gives a statistical comparison of the reading achievement of low-, average-, and high-readiness status pupils who worked under the different plans of grouping. It will be noted that the only statistically significant difference was in the reading achievement of the high-readiness pupils. The mean reading score of the 1953-54 high-readiness status pupils was significantly greater (five per cent level) than the mean reading score of the 1952-53 pupils who were included in the high-readiness status group. It will be recalled that during the 1953-54 school year the low-readiness status pupils remained in the regular classroom.

### Implications

On the basis of the findings of this study it would seem that factors in addition to the method of grouping for instruction accounted for difference in pupil's reading achievement during grade one. Why did the more mature pupils make greater reading achievement in a more heterogeneous group? Could it be that in such a classroom situation standards of

achievement are more in terms of the individual rather than in terms of a grade standard? Does the teacher meet the challenge of a more heterogeneous group of children by doing a higher quality job of teaching? Do the better students profit from being the examples, which situation increases and strengthens their own learning as is suggested by Hamilton and Rehwoldt?<sup>1</sup>

It is known that some children who score low on a readiness test, such as the one used in this study, make good achievement in reading. Whatever factors contribute to a low readiness test score sometimes are apparently overcome rather readily. It seems logical that the weaknesses which contribute to a low readiness test score need to be provided for by grouping for instruction; but any plan for grouping needs to be flexible enough to enable pupils to be shifted readily from one group to another as the weaknesses are overcome or as new weaknesses are detected. Perhaps there is greater flexibility in a more heterogeneous situation, either because the teacher is more alert to the need for flexibility, or because different types of groups are more readily available—a group for the child who has overcome a deficiency and is ready to move forward, or a "remedial" group for the pupil who has encountered an obstacle which must be overcome before he can continue his progress in a satisfactory manner.

Whatever method of grouping for instruction in beginning reading is used, the plan must allow for flexibility. Flexibility is essential in order that pupils can be shifted readily from one group to another so that immediate and specific needs can be provided for in the most effective manner possible. There is some basis for believing that flexibility can be provided better in a heterogeneous rather than a homogeneous group.

<sup>1</sup>Warren Hamilton and Walter Rehwoldt, "By Their Differences They Learn," *The National Elementary Principal*, 37:27-29 (December, 1957).

TABLE I  
A COMPARISON OF THE READING ACHIEVEMENT OF LOW-, AVERAGE, AND HIGH-READINESS STATUS  
MATCHED GROUPS UNDER THE DIFFERENT PLANS FOR GROUPING

Readiness Status		N	Mean Age	Mean Readiness	Mean Reading	Stand. Dev.	S.E. of Mean	Diff. Mean Read.	S.E. of Diff.	C.R.
Low	52-53	51	6-4.1	57.77	20.50	8.40	1.20.	.50	.66	.76
0-64	53-54	51	6-4.1	58.53	21.00	8.17	1.16			
Average	52-53	112	6-5.1	74.21	23.97	7.16	.679	.01	.922	.011
65-84	53-54	112	6-6.1	74.65	23.96	7.10	.621			
High	52-53	92	6-6.5	88.72	26.78	6.99	.752	.219	.973	2.26*
85-100	53-54	92	6-6.8	88.63	28.97	9.30	.99			

\*Significant at the five per cent level

## A Communication

I have read the communication from Anna Gillingham printed in your February issue with a great deal of interest and considerable puzzlement. Is Miss Gillingham by any chance being ironical when she tells us that the alphabet originated 3000 years ago, explains what it is good for, and informs us parenthetically that there are twenty-six letters in the English one? Is she having a little joke when she re-names this 3000-year-old Alphabetic Approach (I adopt her capitals) the Gillingham Technique? Is she by any chance suggesting that it was a mistake to revert to a method (the ideogrammatic one) that was discarded in the West 3000 years ago—a stupid mistake?

But surely Miss Gillingham is not ironical in everything she says. She is in earnest (isn't she?) when she writes that "This Sight-Word Approach swept over America and has worked havoc with reading and spelling." And if she is in earnest, what is the difference, except quantity, between what she is saying and what Rudolf Flesch said in a book that I have heard excoriated by more than one teacher as exaggerated, ignorant, treasonable (almost), stupid, and downright false?

The day after I read Miss Gillingham's letter I talked with a student who within a few months will leave the university in which I teach and go forth to teach children to read. I asked her what method she is being taught to use. Her answer: See-and-say.

Now, if Miss Gillingham's calm statement about the havoc wreaked by the Sight-Word Method is not true, and is known to be untrue; if her use of the Gillingham Technique does not produce the excellent results that she claims for it—why do you let such misstatements appear unrebutted in what I take to be the most substantial and reliable professional publication in the field of elementary education? But if what Miss Gillingham says is true in both particulars,

why are children still being taught to read by an inferior method? Don't we owe them the same best in this matter that we owe them in others?

Granted that there is usually some lag between discovery and application. But if the Sight-Word Method could "sweep" away a 3000-year-old method in less than a generation, I should think that it could be swept back into Neolithic times in shorter order.

In any case, you leaders in the field of elementary education have a tremendous responsibility. I can imagine the public uproar if it were known that teachers across the country were doing something to the bodies of their pupils that might—just *might*—have a deleterious effect on them. Here, however, we have the possibility of intellectual damage, which I should think is at least as important as physical.

If Miss Gillingham is right, as she appears to think she is, shouldn't *Elementary English* be waging a campaign? If she is wrong, shouldn't she clearly be put in the wrong—and Flesch along with her, once and for all? And if the truth is not yet known, an immediate effort to obtain whatever funds and brains are needed to find it would seem to be in order.

I am particularly hot about this because I have had to spend much time that could have been better spent otherwise trying to get one college sophomore to see that "instution" does not spell "institution," another to see that "Chysler" is not the name of an automobile, a third to see that "competition" isn't "competition." Another writes that Elvis Presley sings "slow sentimental ballots" and still another tells me that Andrew Jackson had several thousand "musk-rats" at the Battle of New Orleans. If such students could see what is wrong at a glance, things wouldn't be so bad; but many of them are perfectly capable of staring at their mis-writings for minutes and not seeing what is wrong.

I know that such mistakes are in themselves

not of earth-shaking importance and that some of them even justify themselves by the merriment they occasion. But most of them are just infuriating time-wasters. Furthermore, I catch myself wondering whether some of the dislike of books that is widespread even among college students is not due to poor reading technique. After listening to even college seniors stumble helplessly over ordinary words and misread several times in a single paragraph, I cannot help thinking that those who find the act of reading so difficult cannot be expected to enjoy it.

If there is anything more important for us to be spending our intellectual energy, our time, and even our (or some foundation's) money on, I'd like to know what it is.

—Don A. Keister  
University of Akron

*[When we published the article by Mr. Filbin and the communication from Miss Gillingham, we did not anticipate that we would be stirring up the Flesch controversy all over again. Mr. Keister's suggestion that we should have invited rebuttal to Miss Gillingham would be appropriate if we had not already published extensive expositions of points of view which reject the "Gillingham" approach.]*

*ELEMENTARY ENGLISH takes no official position on questions of technique, and will publish articles on controversial questions if they seem to add to our current knowledge of divergent viewpoints on significant questions.*

Editor]

In 1779, Juliana Smith, daughter of a New England clergyman, wrote to a cousin about the gathering around the hearth with young and old to hear the "two Grandmothers telling tales of all the things they have seen and repeating those of the early years in New England, and even some in the Old England, which they had heard in their youth from their Elders. My father says it is a goodly custom to hand down all worthy deeds and traditions from Father to Son as the Israelites were commanded to do about the Passover and as the Indians have always done, because the Word that is spoken is remembered longer than one written."

I once taught the daughter of Bishop Oxnam in a junior high English class when I gave an assignment on family history, traditions, and customs dating back to grandparents and great-grandparents. Bishop Oxnam told his daughter he was glad she had the assignment, as he had never taken the time to tell her those things. The result was that she learned about a Scottish grandfather who left his home in Scot-

land with a promise to fill his mother's lap with goldpieces when he returned. He went to Africa, but instead of mining gold he patented some mining machinery which made the family fortune, and he did indeed return and fill his mother's lap with goldpieces. Most children would not have such spectacular history to relate, but they could be encouraged to think of all events as interesting, whether great or small. The danger in this assignment is hurting the sensitive child's feelings if he knows his family history contains something of which they are ashamed. In making the assignment, the teacher can ask lead questions such as "Were your grandparents born in this state? Can your mother and father tell you some stories about your grandparents or great-aunts and uncles? Tell us an interesting story that happened in your family history." The teacher should caution the children not to tell anything which the family would prefer to keep to themselves.

Louise Hovde Mortensen

## Councilettter

### REMINISCENCES OF THE SENIOR PAST PRESIDENT

Next November I shall complete my fourth consecutive year as a member of the Council's Executive Committee, with two earlier, single terms preceding this long continuous association with Council affairs at their very center. It has been a happy, rewarding experience for which I am, indeed, grateful. To those of the larger membership who by their support and confidence made this opportunity possible, go my sincere thanks.

They have been good years, these last four—rich in professional experience for me; significant in accomplishment for the Council. I am proud to have witnessed the phenomenal growth of the Council within that period and to have seen important ideas grow and come to fruition during my term of office.

It was at the midwinter meeting of the Executive Committee in Denver in 1954, I believe, that the first serious, organized look at the Status of the Profession was taken, when John Gerber offered the first analysis, to be followed by each first vice-president after that adding his bit to the total picture, and ending with the action proposed by Brice Harris and passed by the Board of Directors in November 1957 at Minneapolis: to set up a Commission on the Profession itself, equal in status to the Commission on the Curriculum, to study the problems confronting English teachers in an age threatened by all the dangers associated with nuclear fission and made suddenly science-conscious. The specific functions of that Commission are even now being formulated. The wheels are turning. Through magnificent teamwork, an idea has been made ready for action.

I have watched, too, with fascinated interest the growth of another idea, discussed and rediscussed, with a narrowing opposition each year, probing every contingency. Was

it in Detroit four years ago that I first heard broached the idea of a permanent headquarters for the Council? No matter! The point I would like to stress is that session after session was given over to the study of need, of advantage, of feasibility, until we felt at last ready to make a definite proposal to the Board of Directors. The acceptance of that proposal is now a matter of official record and authorization for the actual building of permanent quarters on the campus of the University of Illinois is now an historical fact.

Over the past four years I have sat through many conferences set up to discuss our committee structure—to see what could be done to streamline Council activities, as represented by its growing number of committees tackling many diverse problems, and to find better means for coordinating our efforts and clarifying specific responsibilities. This long time effort, too, has culminated within my term of office in an *ad hoc* committee under the leadership of Francis Shoemaker, set up to study our committee structure and make recommendations for improving it.

These are but the more outstanding evidences of growth that I have been privileged to witness at close range. There have been many others. I have watched the office of second vice-president, which once I held, burst its seams, and the task of planning the sectional programs for the annual convention grow too large for a single person. I have noted the steady improvement of our financial condition, and the annual increase in membership.

Perhaps my most intense personal satisfaction has come from participating in a group, for so long a period, wholly dedicated to the job before it. At the local scene one is often aware of tensions that impede progress, of wholly personal considerations that must be dealt with but which none the less cloud judgment and delay action.

At the national level there is always a minimum of friction. Indeed, it is a rarity, and it is sheer joy to give oneself over freely and wholly to the job at hand. I have never experienced a truer professional satisfaction than in working with and for the Council. May

such harmonious relationship at the executive level continue through the years! Council members may well be proud of the professional zeal with which its elected officers apply themselves to the responsibilities placed upon them.

LUELLA B. COOK

From Children's Art numbers of *Shankar's Weekly*, New Delhi, India, reprinted by permission:

**WITCHES' KITCHEN INCORPORATED**  
Group work by Gwyneth Jones, Jean Brown,  
Pamela Phillips, Jacqueline Rogers, Vera  
Marshall, Barbara Walker, 12 years old.  
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Open from midnight to dawn!

Some of our stupendous bargains are listed below:

1. Black cats—Not a spot of white. Guaranteed to have nine lives. Well trained. Hate goodness. Proper witches' cats.

2. Spells—Invisibility spells, 100 years sleep spells, revenge spells, and many more. Can do plenty of harm.

3. New jet-propelled broomsticks—Guaranteed to last five years. Can carry cat as well as witch. Will never let you down. Repair kit given free.

4. Marvellous cauldrons—Stand up to my heat. Good for cooking toads, ants, flies, etc. Will hold the largest earwig. Sold in many colours. Price 1 skull and 6 spiders each.

5. Ointment that will enable you to see round corners and through doors and walls.

6. Wands in various styles and shades—Very elegant this season.

We also sell buttons made from cats' eyes, witch books to make crafty witches craftier, flying carpets and cloaks embroidered with bats and beetles and with wide sleeves for hiding things from the witches' tax inspectors.

All these bargains at give-away prices!

Come and have a fly around! Why waste your time and money elsewhere? Do not linger longer. Jump on your boomstick and come straight away so as to be ready for Halloween!

We have everything for up-and-coming witches! Come and buy! N.B. leave your boomsticks outside please.

#### MY SISTER

Alka Rastogi, 9 years old. Jaipur

My sister is a favourite with every one and they make much of her. But she is so different with me. She is always finding fault with me.

If I am standing, she says, "why are you standing?" When I am sitting, she says, "why can't you sit properly?" When I am eating, she says, "don't make noise while chewing. Why don't you keep your mouth shut when you eat? Why don't you sit when you eat?"

You see our dining table is too high for me and the chair is too low. I can't help standing when I eat! Oh! she has hundreds of things to tell me. I can't do anything without hearing some remark from her. If I complain to mummy she also does not stop her. I don't know what to do!

She is only three years older than I, but how she bosses and scolds me! We go to school every day at 9:30 in the morning. She will be painting or doing her homework, but if I don't get up and get ready in time, she will shout at me. She gets after me and threatens to leave me at home. I wish some one could help me.

I like her, I help her in her work, but does she ever talk nicely to me? I at last told her that I would write to *Shankar's Weekly* and let every one know what sort of girl she was.

## Pioneers in Reading VII: Nila Banton Smith

Nila Banton Smith, Professor of Education and Director of the Reading Institute at New York University, is that unusual combination of scholar and practitioner who translates modern philosophical and psychological principles into actual classroom practice. No student leaves her classroom—no reader completes the reading of her publications unaware of how to implement theory with practice.

Dr. Smith is able to achieve this combination for several reasons. First, and probably foremost, because of her own personality. She is warm, human, and understanding. She always has time to listen sympathetically to the problems of students and teachers and help them in searching for solutions. She possesses an inquisitive, penetrating, analytical mind. She has a well developed sense of humor. She is willing and able to work tirelessly in order to do basic research and then make that research completely understandable to others.

Second, as a scholar Professor Smith has carefully studied the works of all the other leaders in the field and continuously keeps abreast with recent research. As a beginning teacher she sought out William S. Gray at the University of Chicago and took every reading course he had to offer. After earning her Ph. B. at the University of Chicago she went on to earn her Master's and Doctor's degrees at Columbia University.

Third, she has been a classroom teacher

and continues to work with children. Dr. Smith began her teaching career in the Detroit Public Schools. After one year as a classroom teacher she was asked to become a critic teacher; then, after one semester as a critic teacher she was asked to become the Assistant Supervisor of Reading. She went on to become Supervisor of Research with her major area of responsibility in the field of reading instruction. Although the remainder of her career has been on the college and university level, she continues to work with children in clinical, classroom, and demonstration situations.

Fourth, she is a teacher of teachers and is well aware of their needs. Dr. Smith left Detroit to accept a position as Dean of the Broadoaks School of Education, Whittier College. She then became an Associate Professor of Education at Indiana University and moved from there to the University of Southern California as a full professor. She finally accepted her present position as Professor of Education at New York University in 1948.

When Professor Smith began her work in New York University's School of Education, the Department of Educational Psychology offered one course in remedial reading. Now, less than ten years later, Dr. Smith has developed curriculum programs leading to the

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Dr. Robinson is Assistant Professor of Reading and Education at Hofstra College, Hempstead, New York.



*Nila Smith*

Master of Arts in Remedial Reading, a sixth year certificate, plus the Ph. D. and Ed. D. in Remedial Reading. The Department of Educational Psychology now offers 27 semester hours in remedial reading under Dr. Smith's leadership. She also serves as sponsorship chairman in guiding all doctoral researches in this area, which has grown to be a very heavy responsibility.

In September of 1953 Dr. Smith was invited to undertake the directorship of New York University's Reading Institute which now services over 2500 students annually from age eight through adulthood. In this enterprise Dr. Smith is responsible for guiding the work of 50 full and part-time teachers.

One of Professor Smith's earliest publications, *American Reading Instruction* (Silver Burdett), is considered a classic in the field today. In this volume she analyzed and evaluated the various methods of teaching reading that have been followed in America from colonial days to the present. Professional books concerned with reading instruction unfailingly make use of Nila B. Smith's basic historic research as set forth in *American Reading Instruction*.

It was with her series of readers, *The Learning To Read Series* (Silver Burdett), however, that Dr. Smith was really able to expand her sphere of influence to pupils and teachers in classrooms throughout the United States. Here she put into practice, from the first grade through the sixth, the practical procedures growing out of her years of experience and experimentation in the field of reading. And, most recently, that sphere of influence has been expanded to the levels above the elementary school. Professor Smith has just published a book on adult reading improvement, *Read Faster, Read Better* (Prentice-Hall). She is also the author of a series of six books on reading improvement for

use with high school students. This series is known as the *Be A Better Reader* series (Prentice-Hall) and features the application of reading skills in the major secondary school content areas. The first three of these books are published and the additional three will be forthcoming soon.

In addition to writing, lecturing, teaching, and supervising, Dr. Smith has taken a leadership role in giving status to the profession in which she is so deeply interested. She was active in the early organization and development of the International Reading Association and was one of the organization's first presidents. She is now chairman of the Publications Committee which has a major share of responsibility in the policies relating to the publication of its Annual Proceedings and of its journal, *The Reading Teacher*. Dr. Smith is invited to speak at many more professional conferences than she is able to accept but somehow finds time to make new and vital contributions at several such conferences annually.

If one were forced, however, to pick the area of endeavor which will be most enduring, it would not be phonics, or study skills, or the history of reading instruction. It would not be the directorship of the Reading Institute nor the various publications. Certainly all of these areas are vital and represent real contributions. But most important of all would be what Nila Banton Smith has been able to do for her students throughout the years. She is a vibrant teacher able to inspire the graduate students, mainly teachers, who come to her to learn about reading instruction. And, beyond inspiration, she is able to see eye-to-eye with these teachers in pointing to ways in which they can apply modern research and psychology in meeting their classroom needs. Nila Banton Smith, above all, is a teacher's teacher!

# Idea Inventory

Edited by LOUISE HOVDE MORTENSEN



Louise H. Mortensen

How well do you know your neighbor state? Minnesota is giving everyone a chance to learn about the Land of the Sky-Blue Water during 1958 while celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of joining the Union. "Books Aplenty" about Minnesota has been broadcast over KUOM on Tuesdays from November through May and is presented by students of the St. Paul Radio Workshops. Minnesota, like Florida and California, is a state which has been under four flags, French, Spanish, English, and American. It was part of New France from 1671 to 1763, when Quebec fell to the British. A land inhabited by Indians, fur-traders, voyageurs, and soldiers on the frontier, it changed to logging, steam-boating, iron-mining, and milling, as well as farming. All of these in Minnesota have been told in books reviewed by the Educational Radio-Television Division of the St. Paul Public Schools.

To go back to the beginning, there is *Boy of the North: The Story of Pierre Radisson* by Ronald Syme (Morrow) and *The Young Voyageur* by Dirk Gringhuis (Whittlesey) about a boy in 1762. *Empire of Fur* by August Derleth (Aladdin) is about the traders who met at Grand Portage in the early 1800's. *Pike of Pike's Peak* by Nina Brown Baker (Harcourt) includes the episode when Lt. Zebulon M. Pike ascended the Mississippi River in 1805 and bought the land from the Indians on which Fort Snelling was to be built for frontier defense. *Early Candlelight* by Maud Hart Lovelace (U. of Minn. Press) is a story of old Fort Snelling and the fur-trading post across the Minnesota River, now Mendota. *Penny Lavender* by Rose M. Sackett (Macmillan) is also about old Fort Snelling. *Land of Sky-Blue Waters* by August Derleth (Aladdin) is a fifth-grade book about

early Minnesota in 1820. *Fire Canoe* by Elsa Falk (Follett) is about an 1850 trip by paddle-wheel steamer to the headwaters of the Mississippi River with delivery of government annuities to the Sioux Indians. *Steamboat's Coming* by Annette Turngren (Longmans) is logging and river life in Minnesota Territory between 1849 and 1858. *Tomorrow Is For You* by Vera Kelsey is in the series on states published by Scribner, "The Strength of the Union." *As the Crow Flies* by Cornelia Meigs (Macmillan) is about early days, as is *Swift Rivers* by Meigs (Little) and *Silver Trap* by Adrian Stoutenberg (Westminster). Pioneer life is told in *Candle in the Mist* by Florence Crannell Means (Houghton), *Drusilla* by Emma L. Brock (Macmillan), *Circle of Trees* by Dana Farolla (Lippincott), *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, *By the Shores of Silver Lake* and *The Long Winter* by Laura Wilder (Harper). *Red River Runs North* by Vera Kelsey (Harper) and *The Little Whirlwind* by Margaret Ann Hubbard (Macmillan) are laid in the Red River Valley. Sonia Bleeker has *Chippewa Indians: Rice Gatherers of the Great Lakes* in her series (Morrow).

*The Story of the Great Lakes* by Mary Gilchrist (Harper) and *Ships of the Great Lakes* by Walter Buehr (Putnam) were on the radio series, as was *Halloran's Hill* by Margaret Ann Hubbard (Macmillan), about Duluth railroad. *Winter on the Johnny Smoker* and *Treasure on the Johnny Smoker* by Mildred H. Comfort (Morrow) are river books. *Legends of Paul Bunyan* by Harold W. Felton (Knopf), *Cache*

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Mrs. Mortensen has degrees in English from Smith College and Columbia, with special work at the University of Iowa, New York University, and Drake University.

*Lake Country* by John J. Rowlands (Norton), *Heavy Water* by Earl V. Chapin (Abelard), *Down the Mississippi* by Clyde Robert Bulla (Crowell), *Minn of the Mississippi* and also *Paddle-to-the-Sea* by Holling C. Holling (Houghton) were all on the program. *Climb a Lofty Ladder* by W. and M. Havighurst (Winston), *Here Comes Kristie* by Emma L. Brock (Knopf), *High Prairie* by the Havighursts (Rinehart), and *Homecoming* by Borghild Dahl (Dutton) are Scandinavian life. *The Middle Sister* by Miriam E. Mason (Macmillan), *Elsa's Secret* by Eve Grey (Doubleday), *Ob Susanna!* by Ruth and Richard Holberg (Doubleday), and *Listen My Heart* by Ellen Turngren (Longmans) are farm life. *Singing Wilderness* by Sigurd Olson (Knopf), *Fiddlefoot Jones of the North Woods* by Philip D. Jordan (Vanguard), *Snowshoe Country* by Florence P. Jacques (U. of Minn.). *The Mayos: Pioneers*

*in Medicine* by Adolph Regli (Messner) and *Wanda Gag, the Story of an Artist* by Alma Scott (U. of Minn.) are about famous people. *Family Grandstand* by Carol Ryrie Brink (Viking) is about a modern professor's family.

Free material is available during 1958 from the Minnesota Statehood Centennial Commission at 1958 University Ave., St. Paul 4, Minnesota. At all times, the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, has interesting literature. The Society publishes *The Gopher Historian*, a magazine for school children, three times a year, Fall, Winter, and Spring. As one semester of state history is required in the Gopher State, English teachers may easily expect outside reading to reflect an interest in local traditions. No wonder the boys and girls of the state can broadcast fine programs of book reviews.

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When composition books were neatly divided into sections on Narration, Description, and Exposition, my youthful contribution to an exposition assignment was an explanation called "How to Make Gingerbread." The objective was to write the explanation clearly with the sentences in proper order. This little school assignment has always stayed with me because the class to whom I read "How to Make Gingerbread" praised it as very well done.

With the present popularity of How-To-Do-It books, such assignments could be made frequently. College girls who major in Home Economics often take Journalism courses in order to write for newspapers and magazines as food editors, and this kind of writing about fundamentals like food and clothing can be

started in grade-school classes. The main thing is to make the explanation perfectly clear so that the readers may follow the directions, but some words describing flavor and taste such as the magazine editors often use can be included, like "a crunchy, butter-brown sugar topping" or "a rich, spicy cooky dough." These word-pictures referring to the familiar objects in kitchens and pantries will be a good exercise in vocabulary-building. Boys may write How-To-Do-It assignments on manual training, for instance, "How to Build a Bird-House" or "How to Earn Cub Scout Points." Some verbs the food editors use are core, peel, stuff, stir, simmer, pour, bake, serve, freeze, cool, wrap, thaw, heat, combine, sift, beat, sprinkle, arrange, roll, sift, cut.

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# Windows on the World

## The Popular Arts in the Classroom

Edited by IRIS VINTON

May, with alle thy floures and thy grene,  
Welcome be thou, faire, freshe May.<sup>1</sup>

The custom of welcoming in the month of May was an ancient one and existed long before Chaucer tells about Arcite hastening in the gray of early morn, to the grove to gather woodbine and hawthorn leaves to fashion a garland "for to doon his observaunce to May," and to sing loudly "ageyn the sonne shene" his greeting to the merry season.

From the fourteenth to the twentieth century, the ushering in of May has undergone considerable change. No longer do May-poles grace every green, leaf-clad Queens and Kings of the May hold royal progresses, bands of young girls go about singing carols on the first Sunday, people gather for the fire-festival, or baskets of flowers hang upon the house doors. The ancient and traditional rituals and ceremonies have gradually been sloughed off, although the general attitude toward the season remains in some respects much the same as that within the earliest memory of man.

With the coming of warm weather, the call of the outdoors ever is as the singing of the sirens, luring hearers to some enchanted place. In America, nineteenth century Tom Sawyer yearns:

"The locust trees in bloom and the fragrance of the blossoms filled the air. Cardiff Hill, beyond the village and above it, was green with vegetation; and it lay just far enough away to seem a Delectable Land, dreamy, reposeful, and inviting."

And here is Walt Whitman in *Specimen Days*, sounding "An Early Summer Reveille."

Miss Vinton is Director of Publications for the Boys' Clubs of America. She is also the author of many books, stories, and plays for children.

"Away from curtain, carpet, sofa, book—from society—from city house, street and modern improvements and luxuries—away to the primitive winding . . . wooded creek, with its untrimm'd bushes and turf'y banks—away from ligatures, tight boots, buttons, and the whole cast-iron civilized life . . ."

And how like an echo he is to Chaucer who writes, in *The Legend of Good Women*, that during the winter he worked hard all day, took little recreation, and at night used "to sit at a book, as dumb as a stone, till his look was dazed" but

"Whan that the month of May  
Is comen, and that I here the foules syng,  
And that the floures gynnen for to spryng,  
Farewel my bok, and my devocioun!"

Eight centuries ago, Fan Cheng-Ta\* during the Sung Dynasty sang of the golden year's springtime in these words:

"In the high fields the green of the wheat  
    runs  
To join the mountain curve, green and  
    bronze.  
The river meadows, not yet under the  
    plow,  
A darker, more luxuriant, greeness show.  
The village, aglow with flowering almond  
    and peach,  
Looks like a picture drawn with silver  
    stitch:  
And there the people, with song, dancing,  
    and drum,  
Make festival because the spring is come."

<sup>1</sup>Geoffrey Chaucer. *The Canterbury Tales. The Knight's Tale.*

\**The Golden Year of Fan Cheng-Ta*, rendered in English verse by Gerald Bullett, in *Countrymen's Companion*, edited by David B. Greenberg. Harper Brothers. 1947.



Iris Vinton

Yes, indeed, there is singing and dancing and all the world is gay when it is May, and devotion to the daily round of school and work soon can be interrupted for fun and adventure in the open air beneath the sky, even if the air be that of city streets and the sky a blue slit overhead between the tall buildings. Down through the ages, man's joyous return to nature in the spring is the leitmotif in the endless drama of the seasons.

Before the exodus from the cities to places at the seashore or in the mountains, to children's camps, or before the start of the family on a summer auto tour, experience readiness can be given youngsters in the classroom. This readiness for new things and unfamiliar situations enables a child to get full value out of his stay at the shore or his visit to Yellowstone National Park. He understands what he is looking at when he sees Williamsburg for the first time. He becomes a true participant in his first nature hike, since he has some idea of what he is looking for and he has a good start toward using his eyes to see with.

For preparing for summer in the outdoors, there is an endless number of free films available on nature lore and nature trails, as well as motion pictures, filmstrips and slides on our National Parks, National Monuments, and Indian Reservations. One of the best sources for information on these materials is the latest editions of *Educators Guide to Free Films* and *Educators Guide to Free Materials*, Educators Progress Service, Box 497, Randolph, Wisconsin.

In the section on Geography in the film guide, for example, there are motion pictures on everything from an Arizona Adventure to World in a Week—California, from holidays in Alaska to jaunts through the jungles of Middle America.

The Sinclair Oil Corporation has been running a series of advertisements, which the company calls, American Conservation Series. One of the latest ads states: "If you'd like to visit

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, Oklahoma, or drive anywhere in the U. S. A., let us plan your trip. Write: Tour Bureau, Sinclair Oil Corp., 600 Fifth Avenue, New York 20, N. Y., and ask for colorful National Parks map." Incidentally, the Wichita Mountains refuge is where the last of the real longhorns can be seen. It might be a good project for the class to plan an imaginary trip to the refuge, with the help of the Tour Bureau. It is just possible that one of the children's families is going on vacation to a National Park and the class can actually plan a real trip.

For free loan from Association Films is "Alice in Washington," a 19-minute color film, parodying *Alice in Wonderland*. In the film on Washington, the grown-up little girl visits the nation's capital and its most famous landmarks. There are camera tricks which will delight children and perhaps some of their elders, too.

Most agencies concerned with youth do a good job of giving youngsters an idea of the meaning of and a chance to take part in campfire councils and ceremonies. A sharing of these experiences in the classroom can help every child toward a broader understanding of the ways in which different peoples regarded and some still regard the communal fire. The majority of summer camps accent the American Indian and his fire rituals, but there are possibilities, too, in talking about the cowboy in both North and South America and his storytelling around the open fire on the range or pampas.

Summer is, of course, a time for dancing. Indian as well as folk dancing can be seen on film, but a "live" performance by a local folk dance group makes for a vastly more rewarding time. National Recreation Association, 8 West Eighth Street, New York 11, N. Y. has available special publications and bulletins on folk dancing. *Folk Dance Guide* by Paul Schwartz can be purchased for \$1.00 from that organization. It is an

excellent source of information on the various facets of folk dancing in the United States, and includes a calendar of annual events and a directory of instruction groups.

"Hi Neighbor" is a 10-inch LP record of music from the five UNICEF countries. Children will enjoy hearing the songs sung by children of the countries and have fun with the simple folk dances. The unusual instruments and rhythms appeal to all ages. And they are all authentic. The price of the record is \$3.00 from United States Committee for UNICEF, United Nations, New York, N. Y.

Although Chaucer may have said farewell to his books with the coming of spring-time, back in the fourteenth century, today he would probably tuck some summer reading under his arm when he went vacationing. After all, today's books can be tucked under the arm.

For an arm-chair visit with the people of Europe as they enjoy a Sunday afternoon in the spring, "as they might be seen by an American visiting Europe for the first time," look in on the "Wide Wide World" program, Sunday, June 8 (NBC-TV, 4:00-5:30 pm., EDT). It will be the first Eurovision program to be shown in the United States.

The following list of books for summer experience readiness and vacation reading, was prepared by Lavinia Dobler, librarian, *Scholastic Magazines*, and author, whose most recent book, *A Business of Their Own*, about a Junior Achievement group of teenagers who start their own cosmetic business, was published this spring by Dodd, Mead & Company.

#### Booklist

*The Real Book About Our National Parks.* By Nelson Beecher Keyes. Garden City, 1957. \$1.95.

This recent book tells the stories about the popular parks in the United States. There is a fine map and the book is illustrated with

43 photographs. For the middle and junior high grades.

*The American Heritage Book of Great Historic Places.* Simon and Schuster, 1957  
\$12.50.

This illustrated volume is a new kind of history as well as a guide to the historic riches that can be seen in the United States. There are 700 pictures, many of them in full color. For the middle and upper grades.

*Familiar Animals of America.* By Will Barker. Harper, 1956. \$4.95.

The wild animals boys and girls are likely to see in a city park, a suburban yard, in neighboring woods and fields or in the wilder areas of mountain and prairie are well described. For middle and upper grades.

*Junior Book of Insects.* By Edwin Way Teale. Dutton, 1953, \$3.00.

There are interesting facts about the lives and habits of the common insects together with simple instructions for collecting, rearing, and studying them. Illustrated with photographs and drawings by the author. For middle and upper grades.

*First Book of Bugs.* By Margaret Williamson. Franklin Watts, 1949. \$1.95.

An excellent introductory book on bugs and insects. Ample and absorbing information is presented in simple direct style. For lower grades.

*First Book of Snakes.* By John Hoke. Franklin Watts, 1952. \$1.95.

All kinds of fascinating information about snakes, their origin, characteristics, habits, kinds, enemies, poisonous snakes, snake poisoning, snakes as pets. For the lower and middle grades.

*Minn of the Mississippi.* By Holling C. Holling. Houghton Mifflin, 1951. \$3.00.

The adventures of a three-legged snapping turtle named Minn who was pushed along the Mississippi's 2,500 miles from near Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. For the middle and junior high grades.

*The Pond Book.* By Albro Gaul.

Coward-McCann, 1955. \$2.75.

Fascinating insects that inhabit the shores and pools of water will give the boy and girl a new interest. For middle grades.

*The Story of Shells: A Guidebook for Young Collectors.* By Curtis Martin. Harvey House, 1956. \$2.50. For middle and junior high grades.

*Exploring the Animal Kingdom.* By Millicent E. Selsam. Garden City, 1957. \$2.50 For middle and upper grades.

*The Bird Watchers.* By Marjory Bartlett Sanger. Dutton, 1957. \$2.75. For middle grades.

*Our American Trees.* By Ruth H. Dudley. Thomas Y. Crowell, 1956. \$2.50.

*Wild Animals of the Five Rivers Country.* By George C. Franklin. Houghton, 1947. \$3.00. Stories about the habits of wild animals along the Continental Divide in Colorado and New Mexico. For middle and upper grades.

*Wild Animals of the Southwest.* By George C. Franklin. C. Houghton, 1950. \$2.50. The Rio Grande with its environs is the setting for these animal stories. For the middle grades.

*Wild Folk of the Pond.* By Carroll L. Fenton. Day, 1948. 1948. The life stories of thirteen familiar little creatures of the ponds and creeks.

*Animal Tracks.* By George F. Mason. Morrow, 1946, \$2.00. Of interest to a nature lover. For middle grades.

*Animal Sounds.* By George F. Mason. Morrow, 1946. \$2.00. Selections for May, 1958:

For boys and girls 5 and 6 years old:

*Mystery of the Gate Sign,* by Margaret Friskey. Childrens Press, \$2.50

Childrens Press, \$2.50

For boys and girls 7 and 8 years old:

*Increase Rabbit,* by T. L. McCready, Jr.

Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, \$2.75

1948. \$2.00.

Descriptions of the animal sounds and the mechanisms that produce them. For the middle grades.

*Animal Homes.* By George F. Mason. Morrow, 1947. \$2.00.

Brief descriptions with diagrams and line drawings show how some of the commoner animals build their nests. For the middle grades.

*Song of the Seasons.* By Addison Webb. Morrow, 1950. \$2.50.

A book written with sympathy and flashes of humor. For middle grades.

*Tiger: the Story of a Swallowtail Butterfly.* By Robert McClung. Morrow, 1953. \$2.00.

The life cycle of the swallowtail from egg to full grown butterfly is told in simple text and in pictures, both in color and in black and white.

*State Birds and Flowers.* By Olive L. Earle. Morrow, 1955. \$2.00.

For the boy and girl who will be traveling to new states this summer, this book will be of interest. For the middle grades.

*Rainbow in the Sky.* By Louis Untermeyer. Harcourt, 1935. \$4.25.

This anthology includes a wide selection of poetry about animals, birds, and seasons. For the elementary grades.

*Insect Engineers: The Story of Ants.* By Ruth Bartlett. Morrow, 1957. \$2.75.

The writer tells the amazing story of ants with enthusiasm. For middle grades.

*Animals in Armor.* By Clarence J. Hylander. MacMillan, 1954. \$3.00.

For boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years old:

*A Beaver's Story,* by Emil E. Liers

Viking Press, \$3.00

For girls 12 to 16 years old:

*Strangers in Skye,* by Mabel Esther Allan Criterion Books, \$3.50

For boys 12 to 16 years old:

*Mystery of Satellite 7,* by Charles Coombs Westminster Press, \$2.95

# The Educational Scene

Edited by WILLIAM A. JENKINS<sup>1</sup>



## The Soviet teacher

Courtesy of the *Edpress Newsletter* we bring you a brief picture of the Soviet teacher. The material originally appeared in Chapter 10 of *Education in the USSR*, published recently by the U. S. Office of Education and received as on the important educational books of the last decade.

*The Soviet teacher is held in high esteem.* Before the Russian Revolution, teachers were held in high esteem. During the first years of the Soviet regime teachers were at first suspected of being disloyal to Communism, presumably because they were members of the bourgeoisie. This soon changed. Today, "teachers as individuals and the profession as a whole have come to enjoy increasing respect, increasing prestige and social status. Pravda has editorialized on "the selfless labor of Soviet teachers," stating the official attitude of the Russian Government.

*There is no teacher shortage in the USSR.* In 1956, 1,733,000 teachers were employed in primary and secondary schools. An estimated 80 percent are women. "More men teach in the senior secondary grades; more women in the primary grades."

There is no significant teacher shortage in the USSR today. The Soviet pupil-teacher ration is 17.3 to 1. "By American standards, Soviet teachers are overworked; by Soviet standards their lot compares favorably with that of persons in other key professions."

*The preparation of the Soviet teacher varies.* Teachers for grades one through seven are usually prepared at pedagogical schools (equivalent to our normal schools, teachers colleges or schools of education); teachers for grades eight through ten are prepared at universities.

A teacher preparing for kindergarten work in a pedagogical school is required to take 2,133 hours of work, spread over two years. A particularly heavy dosage of instruction is given in the arts, drawing and singing and in methods of teaching these subjects, requiring 486 hours. (History of the Communist Party takes up 138 hours.)

A teacher preparing for the middle grades in a pedagogical school is required to take 5,282 hours of work, spread over four years. Here the heaviest dosage is 647 hours of mathematics and methods of teaching that subject. Next in importance are literature, geography, and natural science. Logic calls for 54 hours; psychology, 57 hours—although, of course, the psychology of teaching specific subjects is not included in this latter figure. (History of the Communist Party takes up 128 hours.)

A teacher preparing for grades eight through ten attends either a four-year course at a pedagogical institute (to be distinguished from a pedagogical school); or a five-year course of studies at a university. Here the main emphasis is on subject matter—the universities being divided into faculties training in a single subject such as chemistry, mathematics, or history. "Soviet educators find it more desirable to train prospective teachers in a single subject field and then to prepare them to teach that subject at any grade level above the primary school."

*Salaries vary but teachers may earn extra pay.* The Office of Education report does not provide figures on teacher salaries. However, these facts on compensation can be given: the teacher who teaches more than the number of

<sup>1</sup>University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee.

hours in the school day receives extra pay. Extra pay also goes for extra hours spent in checking written exercises and examinations; acting as school librarian; as counselor; or director of extra-curricular activities.

Says the report:

Soviet teachers are paid by the State under a graduated scale for various categories of teachers. These categories depend upon: (1) length of teaching service, (2) education, (3) grade level and subject taught, and (4) particular place in which they are teaching. Reportedly a teacher who has graduated from a 4-year pedagogical higher educational institution and teaches one of the basic subjects in grade VI earns more than a teacher who graduated from a 5-year higher educational institute of the arts or from a conservatory. A teacher in the city school earns more than one in a country school, while a teacher in a country school receives housing including fuel and light, and if he has rights for such livestock as he is allowed to own.

Teachers working in schools beyond the Arctic Circle or in gloomy Kamchatka are supposed to receive a 50 percent automatic increase in their base salary.

*Teachers receive governmental recognition.* The honorary title of "Teacher of Merit" is awarded to teachers by the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet in recognition of their work in education. This title provides the holder with an additional 100 rubles a month.



#### *Soviet education*

The child in the Soviet Union covers about the same material in school in 10 years that the American child covers in 12 years. He does that, in part, by attending school six days a week, although he goes to school in one of two double-shift sessions (the schools are usually open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.).

The total enrollment in all Soviet schools has increased from about 11½ million pupils in 1927 to 30 million in April, 1956. This enrollment is drawn from a total population esti-

mated at 200,200,000. Between 1951 and 1955, the government reported, the number of students graduating from the 10-year system increased four times. The total number of secondary school graduates reported in 1956 was 1.5 million, compared with 1.3 million public high school graduates in the United States that year.

In April 1956, enrollment in semi-professional schools or *technicums*, usually extending from 1 to 3 years beyond the 7 or 10-year school level, was 1,961,000. This compares to an enrollment of 189,000 in these schools in 1927. The *technicums* train single specialty technicians to support the work of engineers, lawyers, physicians, research scientists and other professional personnel.

Enrollment in Soviet higher educational institutions has increased ten-fold since 1927. From an enrollment of 169,000 students thirty years ago, last year the enrollment was 1,867,000. In 1956 the United States had 2,996,000 students in its colleges and universities. In the USSR between 8 and 12 percent of all college-age students are in college, while in the United States the figure is 25 percent. The number of graduates in the Soviet Union has increased four times in the past decade, averaging 224,220 in the period 1951-1955.

One of the problems facing Soviet education is the shortage of classroom space, but the chief problem seems to be education in the rural areas. Because it is quite a bit behind that in urban areas in quantity and quality, the advancement of agricultural training and military training is hindered.

It would be oversimplifying the situation to say that there is no teacher shortage in the Soviet Union. Teachers there are conscripted, with about 50 percent of the university graduates in the humanities and 20 percent of those in the sciences being assigned to teaching in recent years. Such actions are, of course, evidence of official recognition of the importance of education. As we mentioned in the preceding section, the teacher's lot compares favorably,

financially, with that of persons in their other high-priority professions.

*Education in the U.S.S.R.* is one of the important professional books of our time. It may be ordered from the U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. \$1.25.



### *Help for libraries*

The American Library Association is urging citizens to write their Congressmen urging them to vote the full \$7,500,000 appropriation for the nation's first federally assisted public expansion program provided by the Library Services Act. Under the legislation, the states match federal funds and state library extension agencies conduct their own programs in rural areas.

Passed by Congress in 1956, the act authorizes grants of \$7,500,000 a year for five years to state library extension agencies. Congress appropriated \$2,050,000 for fiscal year 1957 and \$5 million for fiscal 1958. The President's budget request cut this to \$3 million.

A survey by the American Library Association prior to passage of the act revealed that 27 million children and adults, ninety percent in rural areas, were without any local public library service and approximately 57 million more people had only inadequate service. The number of counties without any public library within their borders totaled over 400.

Arthur H. Parsons, Jr., Director of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Md., who is president of the Public Library Association, a division of the American Library Association, has said:

Every citizen who perceives the important role the public library plays in American education, should write to his Senators and Representatives now and urge that the \$7,500,000 which Congress authorized be appropriated to make possible effective continuation of program in the coming fiscal year.

If the state of the world makes it necessary for us to spend billions in missiles,

it is even more necessary for us to spend a few millions to help give our people the means to evaluate properly the issues that make necessary the billions for missiles. The role of good public libraries in our democracy will always be vital; this is particularly evident at this time.

Mr. Parsons added:

Here is an excellent example of a federal-state partnership in an area of real need and present national concern. The President's budget request calls \$2 million less than Congress voted for the current year. This means that state funds already promised or made available will have to be cut back with resulting discouragement to local efforts. Presumably the President's budget request asked for a smaller sum than was granted last year because of national interest considerations thrust upon the country by Russia's Sputnik achievements. The cry is for improved educational facilities and programs. In no other educational area can so much be accomplished with so few dollars as in the field of public library service—an educational facility open to all, used by all, and needed by all, from childhood to old age.

It is necessary for citizens everywhere to write to their Congressmen and rescue from disastrous curtailment this important program at the very time when America's basic educational needs are finally being recognized as vital to the national security.

Here are some of the highlights of the Library Services Act program after 12 months of operation:

Forty-five states, Alaska, Guam, Hawaii, and the Virgin Islands are now administering plans for the extension and development of public library service to rural areas. All states and territories but Delaware, Indiana, Wyoming, and Puerto Rico have submitted plans.

Over 300 rural counties across the nation with populations totaling more than 7,500,000 children and adults are receiving new or improved library services under the program. Forty-one of these counties had no public library within their borders prior to the Act.

State library agencies responsible for ad-

ministering the Act, have been able to strengthen their staffs by adding more than 100 trained, experienced librarians and over 80 clerks and bookmobile operators to improve rural library service.

To relieve the great scarcity of book and other information materials in rural areas, a large proportion of the combined funds, over \$6,500,000, is being used to buy these materials.

Approximately 90 bookmobiles and over 30 vehicles have already been purchased to bring books to rural residents.

Since Maryland joined the program in October, 1956, a new county library has already developed—the first new county library in Maryland in 7½ years.

In New York the first exhibit and demonstration bookmobile has been purchased and several field workers have been added to the staff of the Extension Division, including a specialist in library services to children and a specialist in library work with young adults.

A one-year country-wide demonstration of direct service to rural groups has been undertaken in Woods County, Ohio. Funds were supplied for a trained librarian, a station wagon, and membership in a film circuit. Four applications have been approved for bookmobiles in rural areas. In each case the libraries have secured additional local funds for the operation of the trucks.

The Pennsylvania State Library has been enabled to contract for a thorough statewide library survey to determine the best rural library development program for the state. The Nevada State Library has also been able to contract for a valuable state survey in order to find the most effective and most efficient organization pattern for its rural public library service.

#### NBC-ETRC educational project

Good news it is that the project has been continued. In the 13-week spring series which began on March 24, the Radio and Television and Radio Center at Ann Arbor and NBC have

announced that they will cooperate in furnishing educational stations with three programs. The first of these, *Decision for Research*, will seek to interest promising young people in careers in the fields of medicine and biological research. The series is being done in cooperation with the American Heart Association. On each program a doctor or a biologist will demonstrate some phase of research work.



#### Language arts conferences

The English Language arts, a symposium for elementary and secondary teachers, principals, and supervisors, will be offered at Syracuse University from August 11-August 22. The symposium will explore new ideas and work on practical problems in all areas of the language arts. Consultants will be Leland B. Jacobs, Joseph Mersand, Jeanette Veatch, M. Agnella Gunn, and Patrick Hazard. General lectures and discussions, study groups, demonstrations, materials, forums and exhibits will be offered in full day sessions for the two-week period. Three credits may be earned. For further information, write to Margaret Early or Evelyn Wenzel, School of Education, Syracuse University.

Informal demonstration and laboratory course will be held at the Betts Reading Clinic, Haverford, Penna., August 4-August 15. Informal inventories, development of reading interests, and analysis of reading disabilities are among the areas to be covered in a course in which each enrollee works with pupils. For further information write to The Betts Reading Clinic, 257 West Montgomery Avenue, Haverford, Penna.

A workshop on teaching composition in the upper grades and junior high will be held at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, June 9-June 14. This workshop will be followed by another, June 16-June 21 on teaching high school composition. Guest leaders include Dwight Burton and Robert Pooley.

Improvement in high school English will be the theme of a workshop to be held at

Northwestern State College, Natchitoches, La., July 7-July 28. Guest leader will be Mark Neville.

Teaching reading in junior and senior high school will be the topic of a workshop at Marshall College, Huntington, West Virginia, June 30-July 18. Leader will be Hardy R. Finch.



#### **Summer placement directory**

To answer the needs of teachers The Advancement and Placement Institute has announced publication of their new and expanded 1958 *World-Wide Summer Placement Directory*. The Directory is prepared as an aid to those who wish new ideas and ways to earn while they vacation.

The Directory gives descriptions of the type of work available, salary ranges, and names and addresses of employers requesting summer employees. Included are governmental positions, steamship needs, dude ranches, travel tour agencies abroad, work camps, service projects, earning free trips to Europe, national parks, summer camps, theatres and resorts, career trainee opportunities, study awards all over the world and many others. Opportunities are presented from 20 foreign countries and all 48 states.

At the request of many students, a special section has been added for those students who wish to use their summer in trainee programs for future career opportunities. Positions are available in hundreds of firms in more than forty fields of business, industry, government, science, recreation, and education.

A current up to date *World-Wide Summer Placement Directory* is published annually by the staff of the Advancement and Placement Institute which has been a non-fee professional advisory and advancement service for the field of education since 1952. Copies may be ordered from the Institute at Box 99G, Greenpoint Station, Brooklyn 22, N. Y., for \$2 a copy.



#### **Children's Book Club**

*Tee Vee Humphrey* by John Lewellen, published by Knopf, is the May selection of the Weekly Reader Children's Book Club.



#### **Books and pamphlets for teacher**

*Treasure for the Taking* by Anne Thaxter Eaton. Viking Press (625 Madison Avenue, New York 22), \$4. This revised edition of a book originally published in 1946 includes children's books published up to spring, 1957. It includes 1500 titles, described with brief comments. As with the original edition, it will be of assistance to parents, teachers, and librarians in picking the right book for a child.

*Better Handwriting* by Paul V. West. Barnes and Noble (10 Fifth Avenue, New York 3), \$1. A paperbound book designed for those adults who wish to improve their handwriting, written by a man who has had a lifetime interest in the subject. It starts with the premise that there is a need today to improve the handwriting of much of our population, diagnoses most of the common handwriting faults, and presents remedial measures that one can use in removing these faults. Chief among these are carelessness, attempts to cultivate an individualistic style, and pressures of having to write in a hurry. Chief aid in removing these faults is the development of a *writing conscience*, an awareness of the need to improve. The book includes excellent plates giving samples of various styles and patterns.

*Books and Libraries: Tools of the Academic World* by Flora B. Ludington; *Every Child Needs a School Library* by Mary Virginia Gaver; *Fountains, not Reservoirs: The Public Library* by Arthur H. Parsons, Jr., all published by the American Library Association (50 East Huron Street, Chicago 11, Illinois). All three published for National Library Week in March. They describe some of the functions and trends which school, college and public libraries are following in serving the public. Available only

in quantity lots, each pamphlet 5 copies for \$1.25.

*Reading*, a reprint pamphlet of five articles which appeared in the March NEA *Journal*. Articles include "How Children Learn to Read" by Nancy Lerrick; "Individualized Reading" by Constance McCullough; "Teachers' Reading Post" on high school reading and book reports; and "The Teacher's Need to Read" by Arthur H. Parsons, Jr. Order from the NEA, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C. 10 or more copies, 20 cents each.



#### Mental health campaign

As we mentioned last month, May brings the annual campaign for funds for the National Association for Mental Health. Below is a picture of a mentally sick little boy, a child against the world. At present rates, one child in every ten born each year will need material hospital care—sometime during his life. While progress is being made each year in treating the illness he may have to face, much more can be done and should be done. It can, with your help to NAMH.



#### Child Study Association award

Helen R. Sattley, Director of School Library Services for the New York City Board of Education, received the Child Study Association of America Fifteenth Annual Children's Book

Award for her book, *Shadow Across the Campus*, a novel dealing with the discriminatory practices of a college sorority. The award is presented for "a book for young people which deals realistically with some of the problems they face in growing up in the world today."

*Wee Joseph* by William MacKellar (Whittlesey House) also received a special citation from the Association. Written for younger readers, it is the story of a small boy whose love for his stern but just father is severely tested when he is ordered to destroy his beloved dog. A "wee miracle" of faith gives father and son the understanding they need.



A new volume by Daniel A. Prescott is always a subject of interest in educational circles. *The Child in the Educative Process* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957) is no exception. Prescott is one of this country's leading research workers in the field of child development. His new book is illustrative of the prodigious labors and keen insights which characterize his publications. Specialists in child development will no doubt find it a treasury of source material for many years.

For the average supervisor and classroom teacher the book will be of less value. The rare school worker who has leisure to wade through 500 pages of raw, mostly undigested case history material may gain real professional help. Most readers will be at a loss to make use of or to interpret the significance of "Chester's Menu for Five Days," which occupies most of a page of closely printed reading matter, and typifies most of the book.

Prescott is not fully convincing when he insists that classroom teachers can make detailed historical studies of all of their pupils. His thesis that teachers should know as much as possible about them as human beings is of course incontrovertible, and one hopes that his book will encourage teachers to try to understand children.

John J. DeBoer



May Hill Arbuthnot

# BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Edited by **MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT**

*Mrs. Arbuthnot is well-known as a writer and lecturer in the field of children's literature. She is the author of CHILDREN AND BOOKS (Scott, Foresman, 1957, revised edition), and three anthologies, combined in the single volume, THE ARBUTHNOT ANTHOLOGY (Scott, Foresman, 1953).*

*MARGARET MARY CLARK reviews books of science, social studies, and biography. Miss Clark is head of the Lewis Carroll Room, Cleveland Public Library, and a member of the committee for ADVENTURING WITH BOOKS (National Council of Teachers of English, 1956).*

## *Animals in story and pictures*

*Elf Owl.* By Mary and Conrad Buff. Viking, 1958. \$2.75. (7-10).

The Elf Owl is smaller than a sparrow but wears the look of startled wisdom that marks all his species. The Buffs' pair has made a nest in a woodpecker's hole near the top of one of Arizona's giant saguaro trees, over a hundred years old. From this snug watch tower, the Elf Owls know the changing



*Elf Owl*

seasons and can look down on the water hole that means life to the ever-thirsty denizens of the desert. There they see the creatures come to drink and to prey on each other—lizards, snakes, road runners, porcupines, black skunks, deer, woodrats, foxes, coyotes, peccaries, and fiercest of them all, the desert

lion. The Elf Owls hatch their young and hunt food for them. Spring comes and the huge old saguaro wears a crown of flowers for all the world like a delicate Easter bonnet. The desert floor is ablaze with flowers and every cactus wears a blossom. The sun grows hotter, there is less water in the hole, and finally none. Summer is the season of fierce heat and thirst. With the first rain comes the strangest miracle of all. The desert is noisy with the cluck-clucking of myriads of toads, up from their holes in the sand to lay their eggs in the water pools and disappear as mysteriously as they came. All this Mary Buff tells with convincing vividness because she has lived in the desert, watched at the water hole and been on hand for the emergence of those clucking toads. She verifies her facts as carefully as she writes and the result is a treasure of a book about our Southwestern desert



Margaret Mary Clark

creatures, told with poetic insight and a feeling for the curious mystery and beauty of all life. Conrad Buff's beautiful pictures are in sepia, which is exactly right for these desert pictures. The cover, in color, with one Elf Owl jauntily atop the white saguaro blossoms and the other peering out of the woodpecker's hole, is especially appealing.

A

*A Crow I Know.* Written and illustrated by Wesley Dennis. Viking, 1957. \$2.25. (3-6).

People who have owned pet crows invariably testify to their mischievous charm, and Wesley Dennis is no exception. This is a play by play description of his pet crow Charley, with all the bird's antics recorded in



#### *A Crow I Know*

such delightful black and white sketches that the age range of the book's appeal might as well be 3 to 60 instead of limited to a mere 6. Charley was most unpopular with the other Dennis pets. He teased the dog, ate the horse's oats, spoiled the cat's hunts, and put the nose of Asthma, the pampered duck, completely out of joint. This record of the amusing companionship or conflict of crow and people or crow and animals ended suddenly one day when Charley joined a great flight of crows and has never been heard from since.

A

*Afraid to Ride.* Written and Illustrated by C. W. Anderson. Macmillan, 1957. \$2.75. (8-12).

From the title you know in advance what the plot will be. Sure enough, Judy had a fall and is off riding forever. Then, Mr. Jeffers,



#### *Afraid to Ride*

a horse trainer, puts into her hands a mistreated horse that is more scared than she is. All Judy is to do is to recondition the horse by gentleness, good food, and freedom from all necessity to jump or compete. Girl and horse get back their courage together. In spite of this much too predictable plot, the story is told and illustrated with Mr. Anderson's usual charm. In fact the horse drawings are so beautiful they would turn a seasoned sailor into a horse fancier.

A

#### *A Special Treasure*

*Little Bear.* By Else Holmelund Minarik. Pictures by Maurice Sendak. Harper, 1957. \$2.50. (4-8).

The prize of the year's crop of easy-to-read books is *Little Bear*. The publishers believe first graders will be able to read it for themselves. It does not matter when or where children read it, just so they encounter it sometime between nursery school and late primary. It is an enchanting story, told with a forthright simplicity that is never forced or artificially repetitious. In text and illustrations, the note of warm and loving reassurance permeates every episode and every page, but Little Bear's droll antics save the story from over-sweetness and keep the children chuckling. It is a story that reiterates the theme of unfailing mother love which Margaret Wise Brown used in that inexhaustible favorite of hers—*The Runaway Bunny*. If Little Bear wants to try something extraordinary, Mother Bear aids and abets him,



whether it is a matter of clothes for winter, a birthday celebration, a trip to the moon, or a story about himself. She tries, now and then, to help him face facts, but she stands by when he doesn't. Indeed once she falls into his game of pretend and carries it a bit too far for his comfort.

Little Bear put his arms around Mother He said, "Mother Bear, stop fooling. You are my Mother Bear And I am your Little Bear, And we are on Earth, and you know it. Now may I eat my lunch?"

Story and illustrations are completely one in spirit and in action. Little Bear is cuddly, small, and absurd, Mother Bear is substantial and comfortable. But when, in the pictures, those two look at each other gravely and trustingly, something exceedingly moving happens to the reader. Mother Bear says, "I never did forget your birthday, and I never will." If life isn't like this for young children, it should be. A

#### *Fantasy and Myth*

*Pippi goes On Board.* By Astrid Lindgren. Illustrated by Louis S. Glanzman. Viking, 1957. \$2.00. (8-12).

Pippi Longstocking, the Superchild, is with us again, as amusing and wish-fulfilling as ever. The adventures begin when Pippi, complete with gold galore, goes on a shopping spree with her young friends and starts out with thirty-six pounds of candy. At the fair,

she calms a man-eating tiger by picking him up in her arms and singing him a lullaby. She is also the avenger of the weak and ill-treated. She makes a cruel driver taste the lash and carry home the heavy sacks on *his* back, and an outrageous bully she tosses gaily in the air until he pays what he owes. But for her friends, the cream of their adventures is their shipwreck which is so successful they never want to go home. But Pippi sees that they do, right on schedule. All is going merrily when Pippi's pirate papa turns up with a ship to carry his child back to the happy cannibal islands where he is King. Tommy and Annika are heart-broken, and Annika cries so hard Pippi can't stand it. "Papa Efraim," she announces, "I'm staying . . . It's surely best for little children to lead an order-



*Pippi Goes on Board*

ly life, especially if they order it themselves." Surely this means that Pippi, her horse, her monkey, and her friends will come again to delight young readers. These Pippi books make hilarious experiences when read aloud. A choice example of Pippi's continual challenge to the usual occurs when the teacher explains, "That is why we are here, to be good and kind to other people." And Pippi counters, "Heigh ho . . . then why are the other people here?" Why indeed? A

*Mouse House.* By Rumer Godden. Illustrated by Adrienne Adams. Viking, 1957. \$2.75. (7-10).

Why do children like mice? Goodness knows, but they do! Their oh's and ah's over Rumer Godden's *Mouse House* should be good news for the mice and the publishers. The



*Mouse House*

story is all right if you don't mind mice and a cellar "where rubbish was kept." There in the rubbish of an old broken flower pot lived a family of mice. Mouse-child Bonnie hated the flower pot because she was always being pushed out to spend the night on the cold, cold cellar floor. Meanwhile, upstairs, Mary had been given a box for jewelry that looked like a tiny doll house but said "Mouse House" over the door. Mary retired this useless object to the top of her chest, and there poor frightened Bonnie, fleeing from the cold cellar and a terrible cat, took refuge. Lots of things happened after that, but eventually Mouse House landed in the rubbishy cellar and Bonnie and her family were handsomely installed in no time at all. Beautifully and imaginatively told with exquisitely colored drawings this will be a favorite with those who think mice are nice.

A

*The Painted Cave*. Written and illustrated by Harry Behn. Harcourt, 1957. \$3.00. (6—).

This unusual Indian myth or allegory is told in cadenced prose that reads like a poem. The story is difficult to follow but the decorative illustrations in ancient Indian style are genuinely interpretative and add beauty to a distinguished book. The story concerns Big Hunter who was such a small boy that he asked Earth Mother to take back his name until he needed it. This she did, and sent the newly named Dawn Boy to the People. They were a miserable lot, covered with mud, hid-

ing in holes, and afraid to fight. To add to their wretchedness, Cloud told Dawn Boy that the villainous Beetle had boasted that he could out-shoot Cloud. When this boast proved true, dust-covered the earth and the People were more miserable than ever. Finally, Sky Mother told Dawn Boy to have the People sing a ceremonial song to Cloud to make the rains come. Dawn Boy persuaded the People to comb their hair, make themselves beautiful



*The Painted Cave*

with new robes and sing a song to Cloud. When they did, the rains came, the grass grew green, the People became brave and Dawn Boy grew tall and strong. So the People called him Great Hunter because he had taught them.

A

#### *Other Lands*

*Ho Fills the Rice Barrel*. By Mary Huston Sherer. Illustrated by Marion Greenwood. Follett, 1957. \$3.00. (9-12).

The Follett Publishing Company is doing a good piece of work with its colorfully illustrated, fairly easy-to-read books about other time or places. This one is about the family of Ho Han who lived on the camphor plateau of Formosa. Every day they cut camphor chips from the great trees Ho's father felled. But after work, Ho liked to carve the smooth beautiful wood into ornamented boxes, advised and guided by an understanding father. The little family was fairly comfortable with its chickens

and pigs to furnish meat for the rice bowls, but there were dangers too. Bears and other marauding animals came out of the forest and there was continual peril from tribes of head



*Ho Fills the Rice Barrel*

hunters. These savages were a special menace when Ho and his father had to journey to the city to sell their camphor chips. This particular journey turned out to be more than ordinarily perilous. Ho tried to repair a weakened bridge and was thrown into the river when it gave way. A strange boy rescued him and the two became fast friends. Ho encountered villainy as well as kindness, but in the city the unexpected happened. Ho's beautifully carved camphor box led not only to a profitable sale but to a new way of life for Ho and his father. They returned home no longer to chip camphor monotonously all day, but to make and ornament the camphor boxes with their own designs. Here is a picture of warm, courageous family life, the struggle to win a bare livelihood, a primitive ignorance of the world, and the kindness of simple people. Ho's story makes good and worth while reading.

A

*The Singing Shoemaker.* By Alison B. Alessios.

Illustrated by Mircea Vasiliu. Scribner's, 1957. \$2.50. (8-12).

Mrs. Alessios writes with so much charm that she makes the vineyards and olive groves of Greece, the people, their villages, and their festivals come to life on a very thin thread of story. That is because her hero, Manolis the Greek shoemaker, is richly alive and colors

each episode. Manolis not only made fine shoes but he could sing, play the flute, charm young and old with his tales, and turn sad days into festivals. He loved his work and his village, but he had to see something of the world. So off he started with some bread, cheese, olives, and his flute. Everywhere he went, he looked and listened. He heard new tales in the coffee houses; he learned new dances and songs in strange villages. He made beautiful little shoes for a gypsy's child, grafted trees for a poor farmer, made a rain festival where there was a drought, left friends behind wherever he went, and came home well content. Reading this book will be worth while if one child glimpses Manolis' secret of happiness—to see richness in



*The Singing Shoemaker*

small things, to find friendship over a cup of coffee or a camp fire, to share laughter, feasts, and sometimes hunger, to work and play with people and to find them good, these things are to love life and live it joyfully each day.

A

*Miscellany*

*The Stowaway.* By Vera R. Amrein. Harcourt, 1957. \$2.95. (12—).

Hurrah! Here are young Americans who can outsail Arthur Ransome's lake-bound Britishers. From Long Island to Maine, the three Brice children sail their own boat, guarded by their intrepid Scottie, Dink, and their good sense. The children are well-drawn individuals

—Mark the level-headed oldest of the clan and a fine sailor, Nora in charge of the commissary and an admirable cook, and Toby the unpredictable youngest of the trio. Their pleasant cruising by day with overnight anchorage in small ports is suddenly complicated by the discovery of a stowaway, a boy in serious trouble. They all realize his presence aboard must be concealed until they can find his relatives in Maine, and that State seems suddenly to have moved farther away. The usual difficulties of sailing, cooking, riding out heavy storms at sea, marketing in ports where their extra passenger must be concealed make a good story. Sailing addicts will relish the details, and any reader will appreciate the courage and resourcefulness of these children who are sometimes in real danger. This is the third book about the sailing Brices and if it seems a little thin and talky in spots it still commands interest both for its lively, capable children and the problems they meet head on.

A

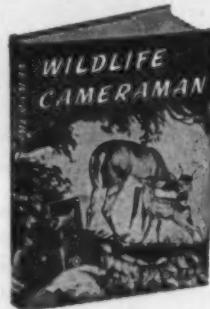
*The Gold Penny*. By Catherine Blanton. Illustrated by Albert Orbaan. John Day, 1957. (8-12)

"Benjamin Kilpatrick Lee! You quit makin' excuses for yourself. I got no use for a whimperin', whinin' boy or man. The idee! Do you think a crippled leg will make you any less a man? It's the head and spirit that counts. And that's all up to you." These staunch words from his grandmother kept twelve year old Benny's courage up when the family moved from a prosperous farm in Missouri to the invigorating but arid climate of Arizona. Aware that his family had made the move for his health, the boy manfully struggled to find ways in which even a cripple could help in homesteading. Lack of water, illness, and fire plague the family as they strive to establish a permanent home, but the generosity and assistance of their neighbors, their own courage, and Benny's lucky gold dollar provide a satisfying ending to a warm story which could give a considerable lift to a handicapped child.

E. G.

*Wildlife Cameraman*. By Jim Kjelgaard. Illustrated by Sam Savitt. Holiday House, 1957. \$2.75 (12-16)

Accompanied by his airdale, Buckles, Seventeen year old Jase Mason sets forth for a summer in the wilderness to prove to himself and his parents that he has the talent required to become a wildlife photographer. Before he is many miles from home Jase's money is stolen.



Not wishing to acknowledge his inability to look out for himself the boy determines to earn his own way. His camera proves helpful as does a later acquaintance with two experienced game wardens. Adventure piles upon adventure as Jase reaches his wilderness goal and begins photographing the wild animals of the wilderness. Eventually his skill helps him in the capture of the crook who had robbed him and who turns out to be a vicious poacher. Jase learns, through hard experience, that his goal demands patience, perseverance, and skill to achieve success. Although at the end the boy does film a prize shot, Mr. Kjelgaard emphasizes throughout that imagination, a knowledge of nature, and long, tedious hours of patient watching are necessary to photograph animals in their natural habitats. As usual the nature angle is vividly handled and the reader almost feels himself a part of the wilderness with Jase.

E. G.

#### Indians

*Little Hawk And The Free Horses*. By Glen Balch. Illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats. Thomas Y. Crowell, 1957. \$2.95 (8-12).

The theft of the favorite horse of his chief-tain father increases Little Hawk's desire to capture one of the horses that roam the Great Plains. At a period in history when horses were almost unknown to the Indians, these four-legged creatures which provide man with a swift means of transportation and a quick escape from his enemies, are the cause of raiding parties between Indian tribes, as well as between Indian and whiteman. Shy Girl, a friend of the boy, is as eager as he to ensnare a horse, and the time comes when such a feat means life or death to Little Hawk's father. That Shy Girl succeeds in capturing a stallion will bring a sigh of satisfaction to girl readers while Little Hawk's daring and courageous rescue of his father provides ample action and suspense for the boys.

Elizabeth Gross

*Wolf Brother.* By Jim House, 1957. \$2.75  
(12-16)

A completely fictionized account of the struggle of the fierce Apaches to retain their lands and their independence. Jonathan returns home having been educated at a white man's school to find his once proud Indian tribe reduced to a piteous condition. Only a few courageous and determined families under the leadership of the chief, Cross Face, hold out against the settlers and the U. S. Army. An unfortunate melee causes Jonathan to join Cross Face's band. Battle follows battle until at last the Apaches are defeated, but not before the mantel of the leadership as well as the name Wolf Brother have been bestowed upon the boy. Imprisonment and death claim many of the leaders but Jonathan escapes, and the reader is led to hope that many of the tribe will follow him in establishing themselves as ranchers. A chance encounter with an Apache started the author on the research for this book in the belief that the Indian side of these conflicts needed telling. A fine balance is kept between the Indian and white protagonists; loyalty and courage, arrogance and treachery all play a part in this action-filled story.

E. G.

### Folk Tales

*Where Magic Reigns,* Retold by Gertrude C. Schwebell. Illustrated by Max Barsis. Stephen Daye Press, c. 1957. \$3.75 (8-14)

These German fairy tales are a blend of the weird, romantic, and magical. Part of German literature they are now retold in a manner entrancing to young readers and their elders. Among them are a new version of Fouque's "Undine," the romantic story of the water nymph who won a soul by marrying a mortal, the weird history of Peter Schlemihl who lost his shadow but refused to redeem it through an exchange with the devil, the frightening tale of the man who for a hundred thousand gulden sold his human heart for one of stone, and the pathetic story of Little Mook whose acquaintanceship with mankind revealed to him the foibles and pettiness of the world. These are not all stories of "sweetness and light" but rather tales of enchantment through which are revealed the sorrows and perils of man upon the earth. Some have a gentle humor, others are highly romantic, a number lend themselves to telling to an older and more sophisticated audience than the usual fairy tale age group.

E. G.

*Baron Munchhausen. Don Quixote. Puss In Boots. The Simpletons. Till Eulenspiegel.*  
Retold by Erich Kastner. Illustrated by Horst Lemke and Walter Trier. Messner, c. 1957. \$2.95 each. (6-10)

The first of a new series, the Harlequin Books. These present spritely retellings of the escapades of the prankster Till, the roguish Baron, and the clever Puss. The latter story has been somewhat expanded while the others, including Don Quixote, have been greatly abridged but provide acceptable introductions to these favorites. The illustrations are colorful and gay with humorous touch quite in keeping with the texts.

E. G.

### Social Studies

*Let's Visit Southeast Asia: Hong Kong to*

*Malaya*, by John C. Caldwell. Illustrated with photographs. John Day Co. 1957. \$2.95 (11 and up)

"Southeast Asia has become important to both the free and Communist worlds. It includes five of the world's most newly independent nations" and is a land whose history goes back through many centuries. The author of *Communism in Our World* writes an absorbing account of eleven countries, their varied races, customs, religions, and political problems. After a general introduction to the history of the area and effects of European influence, he groups individual countries under such headings as British Possessions and States, Buddhist nations, and the "Chinese" Nations of North and South Vietnam. Information is very well presented and Mr. Caldwell succeeds in creating the atmosphere of each country he describes. The book is illustrated with many fine maps and photographs and is well indexed.

C

*This Is A Town*, by Polly Curren. Illustrated by Robert J. Lee. Follett, 1957. \$1.80 (7-8).

At first the site of the town was just a wilderness, and then came the first pioneer. Others followed, and slowly a town developed. The steps from primitive beginnings to complex modern community life are simply presented



*This Is a Town*

for second and third graders' own reading. Illustrations in color are both distinctive and humorous and should add to the children's enjoyment. The book would have additional use with over-age slow readers.

C

#### Farm Life

*The Farmer and His Cows*, by Louise Lee Floethe. Illustrated by Richard Floethe. Scribner, 1957. \$2.75. (5-8).

Beautiful illustrations in rich color help tell the story of farming today and not so long

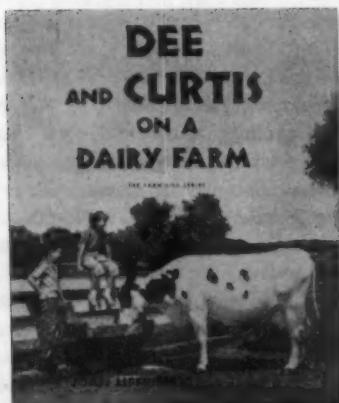


ago. Contrasted are the ways in which farmers milked by hand and by machine; the distribution of milk then and now, and the preparation of hay and corn for winter feed. The adult will feel a nostalgia for the "hay wagon" days, but children will chiefly absorb the ways in which modern methods and machines have helped the farmers. The illustrations will be a challenge to their powers of observation as well as giving much pleasure. This newest title by the Floethes is a genuine contribution to primary farm units.

C

*Dee and Curtis on a Dairy Farm*, by Joan Liffring. Illustrated with photographs by the author. Follett, 1957. \$2.85. (7-9).

Written in the pattern of the author's earlier *Ray and Stevie on a Corn Belt Farm*, this newer book describes two children on a Wisconsin dairy farm. Excellent photographs show the feeding and milking of cows and the making of butter and cheese. The text and many other illustrations tell of the family life of the children, the chores they share and their recreation, in order to present a rounded



picture of farm life. The book can be read by third grade children, but it could be used by a wider age range. C

*The Real Book About Our National Parks*, by Nelson Beecher Keyes. Illustrated with photographs. Garden City Books. 1957. \$1.95. (10-14).

This book is not only an introduction to the twenty-nine national parks in our country and its possessions, but a brief history of the establishment and management of such parks as well. There are five to seven pages devoted to each park giving its discovery, scenic highlights, statistical facts, when it became a national park, and its accommodations for travelers. The end pages show a map of the United States with the location of parks within the country, and additional maps show the parks in Alaska, Hawaii, and the Virgin Islands. There are many small but clear photographs. Planned for both the young "armchair traveler" and as a guide, the book is most entertaining and informative. C

*My Village in Ireland*, by Sonia Gidal. Illustrated with photographs by Tom Gidal. Pantheon, 1957. \$3.50. (9-12).

*My Village in Yugoslavia*, by Sonia Gidal. Illustrated with photographs by Tim Gidal. Pantheon, 1957. \$3.50. (9-12).



*My Village in Ireland*



*My Village in Yugoslavia*

In a tiny agricultural village in County Clare young Patrick Curtin is busy with farm chores, but there is excitement aplenty in the busy life of work and study. Going to market, visiting ancient landmarks, playing games and gathering mussels and periwinkles from the sea offer many pleasant interludes. The authors do capture the strong family feeling and deep spirituality of the Irish people. Outstanding photographs, and a boy's own narrative of his way of life convey effectively to other children an understanding of what life is like in an Irish village.

In similar pattern *My Village in Yugoslavia* is Statye's story of the Macedonian village in which he lives and dreams of someday being a shepherd. The family life, customs of the people and small industries are

well described. The making of Persian carpets and how the skill was passed on to the people of this country are highlights of the book.

Both titles offer absorbing supplementary material to the study of other lands. C

*The First Book of Archaeology*, by Nora Benjamin Kubie. Illustrated by the author. Franklin Watts, 1957. \$1.95. (10-14).

"Modern archaeology is only a little over a hundred years old" but many amateurs contributed remarkable finds long before scientific procedures were developed. Mrs. Kubie describes many of the dramatic discoveries of



*The First Book of Archaeology*

an earlier day as well as those of a more recent period in many parts of the world. The techniques and tools used in present day expeditions are absorbingly presented and there are many helpful two-tone drawings and diagrams. Younger readers are showing an increasing interest in archaeology and the book suggests an attractive introduction. In the study of ancient peoples teachers may find several interesting sections stimulating to the study of history. C

*The Story of the Secret Service*, by Ferdinand Kuhn. Illustrated with photographs and with drawings by Mal Singer. Random House, 1957. \$1.95. (11 and up).

The chief of the U. S. Secret Service writes the foreword to Mr. Kuhn's unique account of the work of the Secret Service in safe guarding presidents and apprehending

counterfeitors and forgers. The origin and many case histories are given, and the reader gains insight into the work of this familiar but little understood organization. The author has made an impressive selection of incidents to give a good cross section of Secret Service assignments. There is an excellent chapter to help the layman distinguish counterfeit bills and coins since a well informed public can do much to hinder their distribution. The protection of presidents from threats and assassination is an impressive task, and many attempts, before and after the Secret Service assignment of body guards, are described beginning with the attack on Andrew Jackson in 1835. A book of this type offers unusual and popular supplementary reading in the study of government and the presidents.

C

*The Golden Book of America: Stories from Our Country's Past*, adapted by Irwin Shapiro from American Heritage. Illustrated. Simon Schuster, 1957. \$4.95. (11-up).

"This is a book full of the names and places, sights and sounds of yesterday's America." From the magazine, *American Heritage* over forty articles have been adapted for younger readers. These highlight events in American history, the heroes, the wars, westward expansion, significant inventions and transportation. Highlighted too are the traditions of an earlier day, street vendors, country stores, dime novels, and early advertising methods. This lively cross section of American history which covers events up to World War I is illustrated with over 300 reproductions in full color, of paintings, old prints and posters, and maps and photographs. The book offers exciting pictorial history as well as interesting narrative. It should be a stimulus to further reading on the many aspects of American life that it introduces. There is a thoughtful foreword by Bruce Catton and a complete listing of the articles on which the text is based.

C

*Palace Wagon Family: A True Story of the Donner Party*, by Margaret Sutton. Illustrated by Mary Stevens. Knopf, 1957. \$3.00. (12-16).

The Palace Wagon was the handsome covered wagon in which the happy and excited Reed family left their Illinois home to travel westward with the Donners to California. That tragic journey is history and the author brings its alive for today's children, with its times of gaiety in the early travel and the hunger and fear during the months spent in the mountains. The story is essentially Virginia Reed's story but it gives a powerful picture of one disastrous migration to the far west. There is a brief allusion or two that some of the living ate the dead in order to survive. The book, which reads like a story, is based on an impressive bibliography, and is a distinctive contribution to pioneer literature. Attractively illustrated with black-and-white drawings.

C

*Meet North Africa*, by John Gunther, together with Sam and Beryl Epstein. Illustrated by Grisha. Harper & Brothers, 1957. \$2.50 (12-up.)

From John Gunther's *Inside Africa* sections on Tunisia, Morocco, Libya and Algeria have been selected and rewritten to introduce these countries to a younger age group. These particular regions were chosen because they "have just won—or are still struggling to win—their independence from foreign rulers." Boys and girls too young to read the adult volume will gain excellent information on the history, geography, political struggles, and social problems of the people of these areas. Writing is vivid and alive and leaves the reader with a real feeling for the countries under discussion. This book is first in a planned series based on Gunther's "Inside" books.

C

*Ice Island, the Story of Antarctica*, by R. Frank, Jr. Illustrated with photographs. Thomas Y. Crowell, 1957. \$3.50. (12-16)

Though Greek philosophers sensed the existence of a South Polar region and named it Antartkos, it is only within the last century and a half that serious exploration has begun. *Ice Island* is the story of these explorations from the time of Captain Cook until the present. The expeditions, ending in success or tragedy, are graphically described, and leave the reader with a feeling for the high courage of the men who set out, whether with the limited equipment of an earlier day or benefited by today's tremendous scientific advantages. Information on the Antarctic region and a description of the preparations for the Geophysical year, together with a map of the American bases, makes this an excellent and timely book on the subject.

C

*Barnum, Showman of America*. By Helen Wells. Illustrated by Leonard Vosburgh. David McKay, 1957, \$3.50. (12-16).

Phineas T. Barnum and circuses are so closely associated that his other achievements are often overshadowed. Helen Wells' biography gives a rounded picture of this unique man who held public offices in the state of Connecticut, and worked for better living conditions for his fellow citizens in addition to being a great showman with an immense capacity to stage comebacks after repeated failures. The exuberant, generous, deeply religious, and humane Barnum emerges from pages peopled with the historical figures of his day as a memorable character of the nineteenth century American scene. This fine biography is based on an extensive bibliography which contains many of Barnum's own writings. Comprehensively indexed.

C



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